



DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2013

AT

JOHN F. KENNEDY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

FOR THE PROPOSED

Beacon Street Project
Project No. 607209
Project Management Section

IN THE CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

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MassDOT, Highway Division
Craig Sheehan, Right-of-Way Bureau, MassDOT
David Giangrande, DCI
Joe Sakelos, Arlington Typing & Mailing

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P R O C E E D I N G S

1 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Alright. Well,
2 good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen. My name is Shawn
3 Holland. I am the Project Manager for the
4 Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Project
5 Management Section. I have been assigned this
6 project here in Somerville, the Beacon Street
7 Project. Before we begin the Hearing, just a couple
8 of housekeeping matters. There is an attendance
9 sheet here if you want to sign in and be part of the
10 official record. We also have a handout here that
11 people can pick up.

12 Just to give you a little background on the
13 format of this Public Hearing, first I will give you
14 a little background of this Public Hearing, why we
15 are having it, what we hope to get out of it. Then I
16 will ask our Right-of-Way Section to explain the
17 right-of-way requirements. There are some temporary
18 easements needed for this project. There are some
19 federal laws and regulations pertaining to securing
20 those easements. We will have the consultant, DCI,
21 give a technical presentation, and then we will open
22 it for questions and comments.

23 First, I would like to introduce a few
24 individuals here tonight. We have a number of

1 individuals from our MassDOT District 4 Office. They
2 are over here. I won't go through each and every
3 name. We have people from our Right-of-Way Office.
4 We have people from our Highway Design Section, our
5 Environmental Section. We have Joe here from
6 Arlington Typing service, who will be making a
7 transcript of tonight's Public Hearing, and we have
8 the consultant, DCI, and we have several city,
9 several representatives.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (inaudible comment)

11 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Oh, and excuse,
12 we have Senator Jehlen somewhere here. Oh, thank you
13 Senator. I would like to open up the Public Hearing,
14 to let you know that this Public Hearing was actually
15 advertising, a legal notice was advertised in several
16 newspapers. For the record, it was advertised in The
17 Boston Globe on January 21st and 28th. It was
18 advertised in the Somerville News on January 23rd and
19 30th, and it was advertised in the Somerville Journal
20 on January 24th and 31st. A copy of this Legal
21 Notice is in the handout that was circulating.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (inaudible comment)

23 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Alright. Just
24 to give a little background, the purpose of the

1 hearing tonight is to have the City of Somerville
2 make a presentation of their latest design. What we
3 would like to do after that presentation is to hear
4 any comments you may have, answer any questions you
5 may have, if possible. What we would like to do, and
6 want the City to do, is to take under advisement your
7 comments and suggestions.

8 Right now, the project is at twenty-five
9 percent design. They have not been approved. It is
10 still an ongoing process. I know a number of
11 suggestions have been made to the City, and the City
12 is looking into those. Once we can all come to
13 agreement on the twenty-five design, the project will
14 start moving forward to what we call the seventy-five
15 and the hundred percent design, and eventually final
16 design. The goal is to try to get this design
17 completed by the end of this year and, hopefully,
18 advertise the project next fall.

19 The Beacon Street Project is actually being
20 initiated by the City of Somerville and they are
21 designing the project. The City has secured federal
22 and state funding for the project and, as such,
23 MassDOT and the Federal Highway Administration needs
24 to review all the design submissions. We need to

1 review the right-of-ways that are being secured for
2 the project. We need to review the environmental
3 permitting and we also have a public participation
4 process, which is pretty much, normally, one public
5 hearing. Occasionally, we will have more than one
6 public hearing.

7 I know this project has generated a lot of
8 interest. I have gotten a lot of phone calls. I
9 have gotten emails. I have been copied on letters to
10 the City and to the Federal and State officials.

11 I was at the meeting last week. I thought
12 it was a very interesting and productive meeting. I
13 noticed that a lot of different interest groups were
14 there. We had the residents. We had the business
15 owners. We had the bicycle advocates. We had some
16 pedestrian advocates. So, you know, there's a lot of
17 different interests involved in this project, and I
18 think one of the challenges the City is facing is to
19 come up with a design that hopefully meets most
20 people's concerns and needs. It is a difficult
21 task.

22 What the City is undertaking is what we
23 call a Complete Street Design and Engineering
24 Program. Essentially what it is, is it recognizes

1 that a lot of different interest groups uses these
2 streets and byways. Again, we have bicyclists,
3 pedestrians, transit users. A lot of different
4 people use the street and sidewalks.

5 The problem is, a lot of times in areas
6 like this, in Somerville and a lot of communities,
7 there is a limited right-of-way, and trying to build
8 everything is that right-of-way is very difficult and
9 challenging. There is, a lot of time, no right or
10 correct design. What we normally ask the cities and
11 towns to do is look at various design alternatives
12 and try to come up with what they think is the best
13 design that serves the general public.

14 Just to let you know, people at MassDOT, a
15 lot of us live in this area. Some of us were born
16 and raised in Somerville, or abutting communities. A
17 lot of us bicycle to work, travel down Beacon Street.

18 I, personally, frequent a lot of the businesses in
19 the area, The Thirsty Scholar, O'Sullivan's, Dali's.

20 I grew up in Medford. I know the parking situation
21 in Somerville and a lot of these abutting
22 communities. It is a very sensitive issue.

23 So, I just want people to understand, we
24 are not in Boston. We are not far removed. Again,

1 we are aware of these issues. We grew up in this
2 area. We work in this area. We bike in the area.
3 We do frequent the businesses. So, we understand
4 people's concerns and needs, and I just want people
5 to understand that. A lot of times, people think we
6 are engineers and we are far removed, but we are not.
7 Again, we are very familiar with these issues, and
8 we appreciate the concerns that people have, and the
9 needs that they have.

10 To get going on the formal part of the
11 hearing, first, I would like to have the Right-Of-Way
12 Section explain the Federal and State Law pertaining
13 to Right-Of-Way, and then, again as I mentioned, we
14 will have DCI give a presentation, and then we will
15 open it up for questions and comments. If there are
16 a lot of questions and comments, I think what we will
17 do to provide some order is, we will have people come
18 around this end here, stand in line, and they can
19 make a presentation, use the microphone so everybody
20 can hear, if people have no objection to that. It is
21 pretty hard to pick and choose people to get up and
22 ask questions. So, if you don't mind, I would like
23 to have people just come around here and form a line,
24 and then you can ask your question or provide

1 comments.

2 So, then I will turn it over to Craig
3 Sheehan, who is from our Right-Of-Way Section, and he
4 will give a little presentation, and then we will
5 open it up to DCI. Craig.

6 CRAIG SHEEHAN: Thank you, Shawn. This is
7 a legal document, so it reads really dry, so I
8 apologize in advance, but it must be read.

9 When the Commonwealth, acting through the
10 Massachusetts Department of Transportation indicated
11 it would accept this project for funding under the
12 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, your
13 municipality accepted certain responsibilities. One
14 of those responsibilities is to acquire all the
15 necessary rights in public and private lands for the
16 design, construction and implementation of this
17 project. My function is to review and recommend
18 procedures that your municipality will utilize in
19 acquiring these rights.

20 The procedures used must comply with both
21 State and Federal regulations. The current design
22 plans indicate that ninety-nine temporary easements
23 may be required. Your municipality may acquire the
24 needed rights through a combination of donations,

1 eminent domain, deed grants, permits or right-of-
2 entries. Frequently, local municipalities will
3 appeal for donations. Donation procedures minimize
4 the acquisition cost for your community. Donations
5 and rights-of-entries are not required and property
6 owners are entitled to an appraisal and just
7 compensation. This project cannot be advertised
8 until the new proposed right-of-way is secured and
9 the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's
10 Right-of-Way Bureau issues a Right-of-Way
11 Certificate.

12 Affected property owners' rights are
13 protected under our Massachusetts General Laws,
14 primarily Chapter 79 and, because this project is
15 receiving Federal funds, the property owners' rights
16 are further defined under Title III of the Real
17 Property Acts of 1970, as amended.

18 I will be happy to answer any general
19 questions concerning the Right-of-Way activities
20 during the open forum, and I will be available after
21 the hearing for any specific questions you may have.

22 Thank you.

23 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Thank you,
24 Craig. Next, I would like to ask DCI, I think,

1 David, do you want to give the presentation? And I
2 ask you if you could please just hold off on your
3 questions and comments until Dave completes his
4 presentation. Thank you.

5 DAVID GIANGRANDE: Good evening. For
6 the record, I am David Giangrande. I am a
7 Professional Engineer. I am a Principal at Design
8 Consultants, located here in Somerville,
9 Massachusetts, and I see a lot of familiar faces. We
10 have had a number of community meetings on this
11 project, but I do have to touch a certain number of
12 bases even though it might be redundant to a lot of
13 you.

14 So, the first thing I want to start with is
15 the project limits. I think everybody is familiar
16 with Beacon that is here tonight. In the northwest,
17 in this general area, that is Oxford. It crosses at
18 Park Street, and also down here at Washington, all
19 the way in the southeast to the Cambridge City line.

20 There is a long and significant history
21 with this project, and I think it warrants just a
22 quick review. The project did proceed to seventy-
23 five percent design in 2004. The project was put on
24 hold until 2011, and then, because so much time had

1 passed between seventy-five percent design and
2 reigniting this project, the Commonwealth of
3 Massachusetts and their DOT asked that the project go
4 back through a twenty-five percent design review.
5 That happened in the spring of 2012. Then, a
6 resubmission of that twenty-five percent occurred in
7 the summer of 2012. Supplemental information was
8 provided about a month ago, and we are at the twenty-
9 five percent design hearing phase.

10 As we move forward, we have some milestones
11 to meet. This is scheduled to have funding in the
12 fiscal year 2013, which means that seventy-five,
13 hundred percent, and final PS&E must be submitted and
14 approved this year, and by August of this year
15 because we would like to have a project that is ready
16 for bid in September of 2013.

17 The design purpose or the project purpose
18 is to provide a diverse arterial that improves the
19 quality of life for all the stakeholders, residents,
20 business, bicyclists, pedestrians, motorists, all the
21 modes of transportation. We need to improve the
22 functionality and flow of the arterial. We are going
23 to upgrade signals, redesign the curbing, curb cuts
24 and the sidewalks so that we meet ADA requirements.

1 We are going to install amenities so that it is a
2 more pleasant place to congregate and meet, and just
3 make a better neighborhood, and we are going to
4 improve the subsurface utilities.

5 There is a lot of talk about Complete
6 Streets. The whole idea of Complete Streets is that
7 it ensures that the entire right-of-way is planned,
8 designed and operated to provide safe access for all
9 users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists,
10 transit users of all ages and ability. So, that
11 means there has got to be a redistribution of the
12 equity that is the right-of-way, and provide for all
13 of the people that are using the arterial, and that
14 is not always easy to redistribute a right-of-way,
15 and that is what we are trying to accomplish here.

16 The existing conditions, this is somewhere
17 near Greenwood, and it is just a good picture that
18 shows the basic condition of the roadway and what the
19 environment is like out there today. This section
20 represents that environment. It has got ten foot
21 sidewalks, ten feet -- I would say ten foot plus, so
22 slightly larger than ten feet, and there's utility
23 poles right at the back edge of all those sidewalks.

24 There's seven foot parking lanes, and then

1 there's roughly five feet, slightly under five foot,
2 bicycle lanes with eleven foot travel lanes, and it
3 is symmetrical. This varies slightly throughout the
4 corridor because it does change in terms of
5 characteristics, where the poles are and other
6 elements that are fixing the carriage width of the
7 roadway.

8 The users, there's roughly twelve thousand
9 vehicles per day, nine hundred vehicles in the peak
10 hour. The eight-fifth percentile, we go out and we
11 do a lot of traffic counts. We did all sorts of
12 traffic counts back in April of this year, and
13 continued to collect data through the spring. The
14 eighty-fifth percentile speed is between twenty-eight
15 and thirty-two miles an hour. Now, everybody
16 probably that lives on Beacon Street looks and, every
17 once in a while, you will see a car just race down
18 Beacon Street. Well, often they are outside that
19 eighty-fifth percentile.

20 Bicycles, there's roughly three hundred
21 bicyclists in the peak hour along Beacon Street, and
22 the area down towards the Cambridge line is one of
23 the -- MassDOT's top bike crash clusters. It is
24 reported on their Bike Crash Cluster List. So, there

1 are a significant amount of bicycle accidents along
2 the corridor.

3 Pedestrians, we don't have daily totals,
4 but we do have counts at the intersections and the
5 busiest is at Washington Street. Washington Street
6 experiences about two hundred pedestrians in the peak
7 hour.

8 Also, it is served by two bus lines
9 directly and then one that runs down Somerville Ave.,
10 that often people on Beacon Street will utilize. The
11 83 runs Beacon to Park. The 86 runs along Washington
12 Street, and then there's the 87 along Somerville Ave.
13 and, with those two bus lines crossing at Washington
14 Street, you can imagine why that is one of the high
15 pedestrian locations.

16 Streetscape improvements, we are talking about
17 putting the streetscape and roadway, and to redo the
18 roadway, sidewalks, roughly seven million dollars
19 worth of improvements along this corridor,
20 significant in terms of the roadway, sidewalks and
21 benefits to the pedestrians and vehicles, as well as
22 the bicyclists. All the sidewalks, from the city
23 line, from Oxford to the city line will be
24 reconstructed. They will meet ADA requirements,

1 current requirements, so that there will be access
2 for all.

3 At Museum Street, we have talked about this
4 a number of times, there is not a sidewalk. These
5 pictures are a little bit dark, and I am sorry for
6 that, but on the right, on the south side, there is
7 not a sidewalk in that stretch from Museum down to
8 Park or Scott Street. This project would propose to
9 put a sidewalk in there so that people don't have to
10 cross the street at that location and then cross back
11 over.

12 This is a great picture in terms of just
13 showing you the -- you know, how tough this roadway
14 is right now, both the sidewalks, missing curbs,
15 patch -- bituminous patches in the concrete sidewalk,
16 numerous patches all the way through the corridor.
17 The ride-ability is poor for vehicles, as well as
18 pedestrians. So, we will make -- we will put a nice,
19 smooth surface in both locations, as well as better
20 define the pedestrian and vehicular space with new
21 curb.

22 Intersection improvements are always
23 important. In addition to new crosswalks and signage
24 and striping, to make it a little bit more

1 geometrically appropriate, we are going to install
2 new traffic signals. With the traffic signals, they
3 will be fully actuated and coordinated in the
4 corridor. We will have countdown peds at the key
5 locations. Obviously, we talk a lot about ADA
6 compliant, very, very important that we make sure
7 that our pedestrian ramps are to code and that
8 everybody has access.

9 We will have bicycle actuation along the
10 corridor, and we look for opportunities to enhance
11 capacity for vehicles. It is a fairly tight right-
12 of-way so it is difficult, but we were able to put in
13 a turning lane on Washington Street, a left turn lane
14 here, which certainly helps with the overall
15 capacity. So, we are actually improving the capacity
16 of the arterials.

17 We grade intersections on a -- just like
18 you would in school here, on a scale from A to F, and
19 the intersections throughout the corridor are, for a
20 design year twenty years out, are going to have
21 improvements in the overall level of service and go
22 from levels of service D to C, or F to D. So, these
23 improvements are valuable in terms of making sure
24 that people aren't frustrated while they are driving

1 or trying to cross the road.

2 Amenities are also a big part of this
3 project. We want to make a sense of community and a
4 sense of neighborhood and part of that is providing
5 street furniture. As you can see, there are park
6 benches planned and trash receptacles and bike racks,
7 and where we do have buses, we are going to look to
8 try to get some shelters in there, and facilitate a
9 little shelter for people using the MBTA.

10 There will be new traffic signals all the
11 way through. There will be ornamental, the black
12 ornamental fixtures that you see through the
13 community now. We will have an accent strip, a brick
14 accent strip, and I will talk a little bit more about
15 that in a minute because it serves a dual purpose and
16 also, as everybody is aware, there is both a cycle
17 track planned for this particular project and a bike
18 lane. So, we will talk in this next piece about
19 where that divide is and why that divide is that way.

20 The other major improvement that we are
21 going to be making, in addition to the seven million
22 dollars worth of roadway improvements, approximately
23 seven million dollars, we have got utility
24 improvements to make. This administration is bullish

1 on making sure that they don't have to go out and do
2 an arterial twice. So, they parcel together
3 different -- package together different funding
4 sources and make sure that their water and sewer and
5 drainage needs are met before we go out and build a
6 roadway.

7 There is another four million dollars going
8 towards water and sewer improvements, and that will
9 happen as a separate contract. That contract will --
10 is under design right now, and that is intended to go
11 out for bid this spring, and that work will be in
12 advance of the roadway work and, that way, we feel
13 that it will minimize disruption. We can -- that is
14 a little bit more of a point disruption rather than
15 an entire arterial disruption.

16 Now, the piece that I think everybody is
17 discussing and anxious about is the parking along
18 Beacon Street. We are now proposing to remove
19 parking on the north side of Beacon Street from
20 Oxford to Museum, and from Park to Washington Street.

21 There will be approximately a hundred and one spaces
22 that are proposed from Oxford to Washington Street.
23 According to the parking study that was done, and
24 then, then it was confirmed by an independent source

1 that I read recently, in the last two weeks, there is
2 ample parking for the residents, and that is a very
3 important piece.

4 There is also, with some adjustments made
5 to the parking regulations, policies and procedures,
6 there will be ample parking for the businesses along
7 the arterial, as well. So, the parking needs can be
8 met. Albeit, it will not be as convenient as it is
9 currently, the parking needs can be met.

10 The proposed conditions, this is a cross-
11 section of the area near Oxford Street, and you can
12 see that we, on the -- this would be the north side.

13 You can see, we have maintained the ten foot
14 sidewalk, and then, in this area, we have a brick
15 accent strip. That brick accent strip is right here,
16 and then, there will be a three inch reveal which
17 defines the area of the cycle track in this area, and
18 there is a three inch reveal here, as well as a
19 change in color contrast with the brick enhancement
20 strip. Also, this zone would be lined with trees and
21 utility poles, as well as other street furniture.
22 So, it would have not only a visual color contrast
23 that you are changing zones from pedestrian zone to a
24 bicycle zone, but it would also have some distinct

1 physical elements in there that also help define that
2 space.

3 Then it would be a -- right here, that
4 would be a three inch mountable curb. That is a
5 sloped curb so that it can be mounted. Then it would
6 have an eleven foot travel lane, then a thirteen foot
7 travel lane on the, what would be eastbound or
8 southbound, and the reason for the thirteen foot lane
9 is so that there is a usable shoulder at that
10 location because there is parking adjacent to that.
11 So, we would have parking here, a seven foot parking
12 lane, and then a full curb in this general area, and
13 then the nine foot cycle track.

14 Now, that cycle track has been changed from
15 a seven foot cycle track to a nine foot cycle track
16 to accommodate the door zone of the parked vehicles.

17 So, that's a full nine foot cycle track back to the
18 old curb line, defined again by that accent strip,
19 and also the curbs, trees and furniture in that zone.

20
21 There's a lot of discussion. I have seen a
22 lot of emails flying back and forth relating to,
23 where does the trash go? Where is the, you know,
24 when you put your trash out? Well, that zone would

1 also, where that furniture is, would be where you
2 would store your trash on trash day.

3 This is -- that last photo was facing
4 southeast. This is facing back northwest towards
5 Oxford Street, and I think it just is an honest
6 rendering of the area so that you can get a feel for
7 what it will look like when it is done. This next
8 photo is closer to Greenwood and, again, this is
9 facing southeast and, again, it helps you visualize
10 the arterial when it is fully completed.

11 This particular slide is at Eustis, and I
12 wanted to put this in to emphasize what a treatment
13 might be in and around a T intersection for
14 visibility. There has also been a lot of discussion
15 and comments about potential crashes, and how would
16 we work the treatment in and around intersections.
17 That gives you a planting area and an open space.
18 Prior to that, there could be parked automobiles, I
19 would assume, and then, it will be open for roughly
20 twenty feet, or so, prior to that next side street.

21 Next is at Sacramento. That is at the
22 signalized intersection that was being proposed for
23 pedestrian. It is a very important location because,
24 at Sacramento, we have a direct connection out to

1 Somerville Ave. to feed the 87 bus, and it is a very
2 important link at that location. So, we are
3 maintaining or we are putting in a signalized
4 intersection at that location.

5 The next section is down from Museum to
6 Scott. This is where we talked about the wall, and
7 that wall happens to be out in the right-of-way, and
8 it is visible here on the right hand side. Well, at
9 this location, because the wall is in the right-of-
10 way, and the historic nature of the wall, the key
11 objective was to provide pedestrian continuity on
12 that sidewalk on the south side. So, what we have
13 here in this section is, we just have a standard bike
14 lane arrangement, and we have added a five foot
15 sidewalk here at that location, and you can see the
16 two bikes lanes with the two traditional eleven foot
17 travel lanes, and parking on the north side,
18 maintaining the sidewalk on that north side, and this
19 is an artist's rendering of what that might look like
20 when it is complete.

21 The final section is the section that is
22 from Washington Street down to the Cambridge city
23 line. As we have discussed in a number of other
24 meetings, that would have the basic section that is

1 there today, parking on both sides with a five foot
2 bike lane and travel lane. Now, we have to work in
3 relocating several utility poles to get the wider
4 bike lane, but it emulates the existing condition.

5 So, I did want to walk you through the
6 entire site, and I think I am going to be available
7 for questions, and I will turn it back over to Shawn
8 at this stage. (applause)

9 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Thank you, Dave.

10 Before we open the hearing to questions and
11 comments, I would like to say again that we may not
12 be able to answer all your questions or respond to
13 all your comments at this time. What we would like
14 to do is, if you have any questions or comments, and
15 if you want those comments and questions entered into
16 the official transcript, you can provide your name
17 and address, and maybe any affiliation you are with.

18 This is, again, in order to put this in the
19 transcript.

20 If you have questions or comments, I think
21 we are going to ask you to stand in line here and
22 come forward to the microphone to ask the questions
23 and comments. There are a lot of wires here, so we
24 don't want anybody tripping. So, probably the safest

1 way to do it is to come around this way, and you can
2 just stand there and just stand in line, and that way
3 bring forward your questions and comments.

4 But, first, we would like to ask if there
5 are any local officials in the audience. First, we
6 would like to have them go first. I know the Senator
7 is in attendance here. I don't know if she has any
8 questions or comments she would like to provide; and
9 then, once they have made their questions and
10 comments, then I will open it up to the general
11 audience. Anybody have any questions, in terms of
12 elected officials?

13 DAVID GIANGRANDE: (inaudible comment)

14 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Yes, good point,
15 Dave. We would like to give everybody an opportunity
16 to make comments and ask questions, so we ask if you
17 can please keep it to two or three minutes, a little
18 bit longer if you have to but, again, we want
19 everybody to get up here and have the opportunity.
20 So, if you can keep it as short as possible and as
21 brief as possible, that would be great.

22 VINCENT DRAGO: Thank you very much. I
23 want to thank everybody --

24 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Could you state

1 your name and address?

2 VINCENT DRAGO: Okay. I will.

3 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Okay.

4 VINCENT DRAGO: Alright. Okay. My name is
5 Vincent Drago. I live at 329 Beacon Street,
6 Somerville. I am a lifelong resident, and I am here
7 tonight to defend our parking spaces, all of them.
8 In fact, we need more. We need more spaces. Anybody
9 here about more spaces? Okay.

10 If you start at Oxford Street and walk
11 toward Museum Street, and wave your head back and
12 forth, you will see two and three family houses.
13 They are populated. That means it is a thickly
14 settled area. We needed the parking.

15 Now, we have to do shopping, we might get a
16 visitor. God forbid, we might want to go home at
17 night. We have to have the parking. I don't have a
18 driveway. I've got family. I've got friends. We
19 need the parking.

20 Now, for you bikers, we have nothing
21 against you. You can ride your bike down Somerville
22 Avenue. Somerville Ave. and Beacon run parallel. Go
23 down to Park Street, take a right, voila! You can
24 keep Beacon Bike Path coming toward Porter, that's

1 fine, but we need the parking, all of it.

2 Without the parking, our lifestyle
3 diminishes completely. I will be out looking for a
4 parking space at the two in the morning to go home to
5 my family while you bikers are drinking pina coladas
6 in front of a fireplace. It's not fair. Sixty-seven
7 years, there are people here that have been over
8 seventy years.

9 We had more people here at the last school
10 meeting. I didn't make the last meeting. Why? I
11 wasn't notified. Now, I am supposed to have an
12 Alderman that is supposed to keep me notified, but I
13 don't have email, xmail. I don't have any of that
14 stuff. I don't have a computer, but you can throw a
15 little flyer in my mailbox. You did that when you
16 were running for Alderman.

17 Okay, I am not going to go there, but we
18 need the parking. It's a priority. We have nothing
19 against bikers. We want Beacon Street beautified.
20 You can put a duck pond in front of my house. I
21 don't care, but we need the parking. Please,
22 reconsider all the parking. Beautify Beacon Street.
23 It has been a mess for I don't know how many years.
24 You all know Beacon. Let's fix Beacon. Let's make

1 it pretty but keep all the parking. Thank you very
2 much.

3 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Thank you, sir.

4
5 NICHOLAS SHECTMAN: My name is Nicholas
6 Shectman. I live at 75 Lexington Ave. I would like
7 to speak to cycle track safety. Are cycle tracks
8 safe? The literature on this appears to be mixed.
9 Proponents and detractors can easily cherry pick
10 studies that show that cycle tracks are safe or
11 unsafe. They can also easily cherry pick studies
12 with flawed methodology, showing their opponents
13 point of view and claim that this means that their
14 opponent's claims are invalid. Even within a single
15 study, outcomes are often varied from one cycle track
16 to another.

17 Does this mean cycle track studies are
18 useless? No. Generally, studies of the same cycle
19 track, a group of cycle tracks, are consistent.
20 Montreal cycle tracks are safer than Berlin cycle
21 tracks. Within Montreal, cycle tracks on one-way
22 streets are three or four times safer than ones on
23 two-way streets and, overall, correcting for
24 obviously flawed studies, more studies cycle tracks

1 are safe than unsafe. Like any transportation
2 infrastructure, safety of cycle tracks depends on
3 their design and their suitability for their
4 environment.

5 Only a few studies have attempted to
6 discern the safety impact of design features of
7 different cycle tracks and, unfortunately, the study
8 which best measures the safety impact of cycle track
9 design uses a flawed statistical model in an attempt
10 to claim that all cycle tracks are unsafe. The
11 City's Design Exception Report corrects these
12 statistics to show that this is not so. The raw data
13 shows that many designs of cycle tracks are in fact
14 safe, but two particular design features that this
15 study identifies don't make a difference to cycle
16 track safety.

17 The first of these design features is the
18 presence of turn lanes. Drivers leaving the main
19 road on a path that will cross the cycle track often
20 do not expect or cannot easily see bicycles on the
21 cycle track. Drivers often expect cyclists to the
22 right of cars to be moving at pedestrian speeds and
23 miscalculate whether they have time to make a turn.
24 This is shown by the number of collisions blamed on

1 excessive speed on the part of a cyclist going ten or
2 twelve miles an hour. Cyclists in Boston know to
3 look out for turning traffic but here in Somerville
4 many motorists do not use their turn signals. Having
5 a dedicated turn lane helps cyclists identify turning
6 motorists and avoid accidents, even when the cyclist
7 has the right of way.

8 The other design feature is a cycle track
9 that reenters the roadway before intersections.
10 Motorists turning off the main roadway have better
11 visibility of cyclists, more correct understanding of
12 the cyclists' speeds and, for right turning traffic,
13 a great distance to get to the right of bicycle
14 traffic so that the path crossing is not constrained
15 to a particular point in space and therefore time.
16 This is called a Shortened Cycle Track as opposed to
17 an Advanced Cycle Track, which runs right up to the
18 intersection.

19 Even apply the City's statistical
20 corrections, the Copenhagen data that they cite in
21 their design study show that, to be safe, a cycle
22 track must have at least one of these two features.
23 Not identified by the study but easily discernable in
24 the raw data from other studies is that the safety of

1 a cycle track depends on the number of driveways that
2 cross a cycle track and enter the roadway.

3 Cycle tracks in Cambridge are all Shortened
4 and located on roads with few driveways or
5 intersections. The Vassar Street cycle tracks leave
6 the roadway two hundred feet after each intersection
7 and reenter the roadway three hundred feet before the
8 next intersection. Vassar Street also features left
9 turn lanes on Massachusetts Avenue. This is a
10 shining example of how to build a cycle track.

11 Examining the streets of Montreal and
12 Berlin supports this conclusion. Neither city uses
13 shortened cycle tracks but Montreal generally has
14 turn lanes, especially on one-way streets where it is
15 easier to find room for them. Berlin does not.

16 There is no room on Beacon Street for turn
17 lanes. So, to make a cycle track safe would require
18 using a Shortened Cycle Track, but the intersections
19 on Beacon Street are generally less than five hundred
20 feet apart. Even allowing for Advanced Cycle tracks
21 at intersections where traffic flows only toward
22 Beacon Street, a safe design would result in no cycle
23 track at all in the outbound direction. (applause)

24 The only part of Beacon Street that is safe

1 for a cycle track is a fifteen hundred foot section
2 inbound between Museum Street and Washington Street.

3 A cycle track in some other location in Somerville
4 could be safe. For instance, Washington Street
5 between Union Square and Sullivan Square is wide
6 enough to support turn lanes and, even without turn
7 lanes, it has true enough cross streets into which
8 traffic can turn to permit a safely constructed cycle
9 track.

10 With the expected construction of the Green
11 Line, this will connect three MBTA stops and
12 transform a route currently cycled only by the brave
13 into something everyone could use but a cycle track
14 on Beacon Street would not be safe for anyone. Thank
15 you.

16 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: I want to remind
17 you, we would like to keep it as short as possible.
18 I appreciate the comments but we really need to keep
19 it short because we need to get people through. Keep
20 it like one, two, three minutes, please. Thank you.

21 MATT CARTY: Some brief comments, this is a
22 major arterial. It is -- my name is Matt Carty. It
23 is there to transport people from place to place.
24 There are principally automobiles, but also bikes. I

1 appreciate the design having safe accommodation for
2 bikes but, when it comes down to a decision that has
3 to be made between a person's life and someone's free
4 storage of an automobile on public property, this is
5 federally funded, state funded. I pay federal, state
6 and local taxes, you know, there's plenty of side
7 streets for people to park on. If you really want to
8 park on Beacon Street, then the price of parking
9 should go up and pay for the project. That way,
10 people can have their parking and the roads can be
11 repaved. Thank you very much.

12 FRED MYER: My name is Fred Myer, and I am
13 from the Cambridge side of the border. My address is
14 83 Hammond Street, Cambridge. That is between Museum
15 and Sacramento Street, and I have lived in that area
16 on the Cambridge side since 1959.

17 My major concern is the effect of the
18 project on two stores that I patronize and I think
19 are important to both sides of the city line; first,
20 the little spa at the corner of Museum and Beacon
21 Street. There is a crosswalk right there, and I
22 understand the proposal is to eliminate that
23 crosswalk. I think that would have a very
24 detrimental effect upon that store, and I would urge

1 you to consider that in your plan. Little stores
2 like that don't have a big profit margin and even a
3 small downturn in sales can make a big difference and
4 I think it would be more than a small one.

5 The other store that I am concerned about,
6 one that I was at the first day it opened in the
7 seventies is the Star Market on Beacon. You notice
8 it is not called a Shaw's because it is not big
9 enough, yet the store is owned by Shaw's. I am very
10 concerned that executives of that company may decide
11 it is better to just consolidate everything into
12 Porter Square and close that store. You will recall
13 that recently the Foodmaster store on Beacon Street
14 closed, and may become a more expensive chain.

15 I think the crosswalk should not be moved
16 from Sacramento Street to the main part of Star
17 Market and I understand the proposal is to move it
18 further north, and that just doesn't make any sense.

19 That market is the chief food shopping area for a
20 whole body of Harvard Grad students, and to move it
21 further away from them and closer to the Porter
22 Square location doesn't make sense.

23 Just one final comment relating to the
24 first speaker, a point you didn't mention, which you

1 might consider, is the people who live on Beacon
2 Street can't park on the Cambridge Streets. So, the
3 people on the Cambridge side of the street don't have
4 access to the side street parking without crossing
5 busy Beacon Street because they very quickly hit the
6 Somerville/Cambridge line. That is a fact that you
7 might consider. Thank you. (applause)

8 PETE STIDMAN: Hi. My name is Pete
9 Stidman. I live at 92 Moreland in Roxbury, so I am
10 not from the neighborhood, but I represent cyclists
11 in the neighborhood, as the Director of the Boston
12 Cyclists Union.

13 So, our goal at the Boston Cyclists Union
14 is to promote bicycles and to get more people --

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (inaudible comment)

16 PETE STIDMAN: Oh, sorry. Our goal is to
17 promote cycling and get more people riding. So, what
18 we are looking for are facilities that can get people
19 who are more risk-averse on the road, and that
20 actually has a benefit for everyone because we have
21 less traffic in the neighborhood, we have less
22 parking in the neighborhood after a while, but I want
23 to answer a couple of the points from the gentleman
24 over here that was actually the second person to

1 speak.

2 So, you had some good points about
3 designated turning lanes and Shortened Cycle Tracks
4 for visibility. Designated turn lanes are really
5 used when you have a high frequency of right hand
6 turns, and what it is, is you control -- you separate
7 the use. So, like the right turns are going when the
8 bikes aren't going, and vice versa, and the Shortened
9 Cycle Track is another way to create visibility that
10 I think the design is starting to look at in terms of
11 the greenery that he was showing at the two
12 intersections.

13 So cycle tracks, as you mentioned, have
14 been proven safer in a lot of situations around the
15 world. That is how the Netherlands and Denmark, and
16 all those cities in Northern Europe have gotten such
17 high biking rates, and you see kids riding to work,
18 and older folks riding to work, people riding in
19 their heels and their suits, and that is our goal.

20 So, also the parking situation, as somebody
21 mentioned already, can be dealt with, with different
22 kinds of regulation, like having two hour parking in
23 front of business store fronts, and that residents
24 can't park in all day like they can now, and also by

1 finding parking in the parking lots that we have so
2 many of on Beacon Street.

3 I would suggest a couple of things for the
4 City to take a look at and to see. Just really
5 quick, raised crosswalks at some of the unsignalized
6 intersections might help slow cars down when they are
7 taking that turn over the cycle track. Also, looking
8 at the same kind of metered parking we are looking at
9 on other parts of the street over at the new proposed
10 Whole Foods so that we can think about taking it all
11 the way to Inman Square. (applause)

12 JOHN ALLEN: Thank you. I am also from out
13 of town, although at one time I did live in
14 Somerville. My name is John Allen. I have been a
15 bicycling advocate for thirty-five years in the
16 Boston area but, Somerville Residents, please don't
17 groan when you hear that because I have seen a plan
18 which I think would serve everyone's interest here,
19 put forward by David Alstead, to narrow the sidewalks
20 slightly so you can have parking and also bike lanes
21 that are of adequate width that bicyclists are
22 outside the door zone.

23 Another option would be to remove parking
24 on one side of the street. Remember, I am a

1 bicycling advocate here, so I am putting forth
2 everything that might look good for bicyclists, but
3 then you would not have to remove as many parking
4 spaces because cycle track behind the parking spaces
5 and with vehicles in them creates blind conflicts,
6 and here is what the Planning Director, or maybe it
7 was the Mayor, said about that.

8 Parking restrictions will be consistent
9 with the April 2011 Traffic Regulations, which state
10 that parking is prohibited in front of any driveway,
11 including two feet in either direction from the
12 driveway.

13 Now, that is not sufficient clearance to
14 provide for safe bicycle travel at more than five
15 miles an hour. Excuse me. Let me make it clear that
16 I am not opposed, in principle, to separate bikeways
17 in the roadway corridor. I have published -- I have
18 published support for some of them, but I take them
19 all on a case-by-case basis, and this one just does
20 not work on the safety grounds for that reason, and
21 for others which perhaps other people with other
22 interests will express.

23 It doesn't work for the regular commuting
24 bicyclists, as bike lanes would, and it doesn't work

1 for the timid and child bicyclists, but you have got
2 to draw the line somewhere. I'm sorry. I draw it at
3 safety.

4 I have seen, as the gentleman here has
5 claimed that the Copenhagen Study was incorrect, I
6 would contend and say that the consultant is
7 incorrect.

8 Finally, I will have comments on some of
9 the drawings I have seen, but I would also point out,
10 this is supposed to be a Design Public Hearing. At a
11 Design Public Hearing, you are supposed to have
12 access to the plan. These are not plans. These are
13 overhead drawings. They are not dimensions. There
14 are no traffic signal timings on these. There are
15 many things that these do not show. There are some
16 pretty pictures at the bottom, but these are not the
17 plans, and so, I would question whether this hearing
18 really is sufficient to answer, to provide us the
19 information we need to answer the questions that any
20 of us would like to answer about this project. Thank
21 you very much. (applause)

22 DAVID LOUTZENHEISER: David Loutzenheiser,
23 L-o-u-t-z-e-n-h-e-i-s-e-r, Metropolitan Area Planning
24 Council for Boston. We are the regional planning

1 agency for Metropolitan Boston. I am a regular
2 commuter on this corridor, so I am quite familiar
3 with it personally, and I just want to express our,
4 MAPC's, support for the project, for the current
5 design and the big picture.

6 As John mentioned, there are a lot of
7 details that do need to be worked out with the
8 project. We do thank the City of Somerville and
9 MassDOT for pressing ahead, really pushing the
10 envelope for design in this project. This is really
11 a model for the region, if not the country, in terms
12 of urban design and accommodating cycle tracks in
13 this urban environment, and we support that.

14 We do suggest that the design be consistent
15 as much as possible, that the cycle tracks do
16 continue as much as possible, closer to Inman Square.

17 That will require thoughtful and extensive parking
18 management. The best parking for businesses is rapid
19 turnover that allows people to make quick stops at
20 the businesses, and allow that space to turn over for
21 other users to come in and use that space to also
22 patronize the businesses, as well as bike parking,
23 and the pedestrian access, which much of the access
24 to the businesses is.

1 We support other elements of the project
2 and encourage raised intersections at the minor
3 intersections - I think Pete mentioned that, as well
4 - curb extensions where possible and the crosswalks
5 that were mentioned, as well, as well as the urban
6 design elements, street trees, and so forth, as part
7 of the project. So, keep it moving forward. Thank
8 you. (applause)

9 BRUCE KULIK: I have quite a few comments
10 here to make. I am not sure if it will fit within
11 the three minutes, but I will try my best.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, try as best you
13 can.

14 BRUCE KULIK: Okay. My name is Bruce
15 Kulik, 168 Grove Street in Medford. I am a commuter
16 and transportational cyclist, and I commute daily
17 between my residence in West Medford and my office in
18 Waltham. I also travel to various points in the
19 Kendall Square area and Downtown Boston, and
20 regularly use Beacon Street as a portion of my route.

21 The Beacon Street reconstruction will
22 certainly be welcome. I know, right now, the surface
23 is so bad that I cringe every time I have to come out
24 of Boston at night, so I will certainly appreciate

1 the new pavement. I will also appreciate the wider
2 lanes which I think will make it a lot safer with the
3 parking reconfiguration, but I do have to say that I
4 am against the cycle tracks, and I think that the
5 City should review them also for safety purposes,
6 amongst other things.

7 I have got several items here that I will
8 enumerate and expand upon. One of the concerns that
9 I have is that a cycle track is an illegal gray area
10 that leaves liability and right-of-way rules
11 undefined. Similarly, the cycle track has numerous
12 dangerous driveway and intersection crossings. The
13 cycle track behind parked cars will keep bicycles out
14 of view of motorists who are about to initially --
15 initiate conflicting maneuvers.

16 I also doubt that the cycle track will be
17 kept clear of pedestrians, debris, garbage cans and
18 snow in the wintertime, even though we have been
19 assured that will be the case by the City. Also, the
20 roadway will no longer conform to the Massachusetts
21 DOT Bicycle Accommodations Standard, and I will get
22 into that in just a bit.

23 The cycle track will be an uncomfortable
24 ride due to changes in level at the street crossings

1 and possibly at the driveways, and the mountable curb
2 will be dangerous to cyclists who need to transition
3 between the track and the street. Finally, the
4 design speed of the track is significantly less, as
5 has been mentioned by other people, than the design
6 speed of the vehicle. Let me talk about these in
7 more detail. I'm sorry?

8 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: (inaudible
9 comment)

10 BRUCE KULIK: Okay. Well, I think there's
11 are important points to make and -- you know, okay.
12 I will write them down and get them sent in, as well.
13 Thank you.

14 Massachusetts Law has no definition for
15 cycle track. As currently designed, the proposed
16 cycle track is really part of the sidewalk and,
17 therefore, is considered a pedestrian facility.
18 Massachusetts Law does not specify how a bicycle
19 should operate on the sidewalk, except to say that
20 bicycles must yield to pedestrians and that bicycles
21 cannot operate in business districts; also, that they
22 can operate outside of business districts unless
23 prohibited by the cities or towns. Otherwise, it
24 doesn't expand any of the rights or responsibilities

1 of pedestrians to bicycles. So, there is really a
2 gray area as to exactly how bicycles should operate
3 when they are on the sidewalk which, as I said, is
4 really what the cycle tracks are here. Yes.

5 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Sir.

6 BRUCE KULIK: Yes.

7 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: I know you have
8 quite a few pages of comments. What you could do is
9 send those comments in to the City and to us. We
10 will make a decision --

11 BRUCE KULIK: Well, I also think it is
12 important for many people here to hear what these
13 comments are about because it is a controversial
14 issue and there are many people that have advocated
15 for them, and I think it is right to hear the
16 detractor's study, as well.

17 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Yes, except we
18 have other people here, too. (applause) Can I ask
19 you, let people come through quick, and then you come
20 back and elaborate? Would that work?

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (inaudible comment
22 from audience)

23 BRUCE KULIK: Thank you.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (inaudible comment

1 from audience)

2 BRUCE KULIK: Massachusetts Law goes on to
3 say that motor vehicles must yield to pedestrians
4 within a crosswalk, but also indicate that a
5 pedestrian must not step into the path of a motor
6 vehicle that is so close as to constitute an
7 immediate hazard. What that means is, when a bicycle
8 comes to an intersection, they have to be careful not
9 to cross in front of a car that is about to turn in
10 front of them. Not only that, the car is not going
11 to see them. So, when a collision between a motor
12 vehicle and a bicycle occurs, and they will occur,
13 who is going to be at fault? That is something for
14 both the motorists and the pedestrians to think about
15 with the implementation of these cycle tracks.

16 We have already talked about driveway
17 crossings. I won't go into that further. We have
18 talked about the parked cars obscuring the bicycles.

19 I won't go into that.

20 I am concerned about the snow. If
21 Cambridge is an example, and I don't see why it
22 wouldn't be, I have found that the Concord Avenue
23 bicycle track and the Vassar Street tracks are not
24 adequately cleared up in snow storms and people do

1 ride in the winter.

2 I can come back, if you would like, and
3 talk about the reason I think it won't adhere to the
4 DOT Accommodation Standard.

5 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: I appreciate
6 that. You know, (inaudible phrase - applause) Thank
7 you.

8 RANDY STERN: Hi. My name is Randy Stern.
9 I am a Cambridge resident. I am the Chairperson of
10 the Cambridge Bicycle Committee, but I am not here to
11 speak for the Committee. I am here to speak for
12 myself.

13 I think that we see the three hundred
14 cyclists per hour maximum that was counted on Beacon
15 Street, I think we all know that this is going to be
16 growing dramatically in the years ahead. The trends
17 are that cycling will be increasing. Car traffic
18 will be declining, and I think that bicyclists have
19 voted with their -- not all, of course, but many
20 bicyclists have voted with their opinions that they
21 would cycle more, and they know a lot of people who
22 would cycle more, if there were separated cycle
23 facilities more frequently on our major arterial
24 streets.

1 So, I am in favor of the cycle tracks. I
2 applaud the City of Somerville for the vision that
3 has been shown by advocating for these here, as well
4 as the Mass Department of Transportation. I think it
5 could go further. If I were doing this design
6 myself, I would continue those cycle tracks down and
7 perhaps move that wall over by eminent domain, or
8 something, and make more space there but, at any
9 rate, I just wanted to express support for the cycle
10 tracks and I feel that many of the safety issues that
11 have been raised can be dealt with in subsequent
12 design cycles. Thank you. (applause)

13 DAVID WATSON: I am David Watson. I am the
14 Executive Director of MassBike, the Massachusetts
15 Bicycle Coalition. I am also an every-day Beacon
16 Street rider. It is part of my commute. So, I am
17 very familiar with Beacon Street. I will also say
18 that I am not just passing through. I am also a
19 customer of many of the businesses along Beacon
20 Street, which I discovered once I started commuting
21 along this route, and I think it is important to
22 remember that bicyclists are not just passing
23 through. We are also stopping and interacting with
24 everybody else in the neighborhood.

1 Now, as a bicycle advocate, my goal is to
2 see more people riding, but that is only going to
3 happen if they feel safe doing so. The major reason
4 that people today say they are not riding is because
5 they don't feel safe. They don't feel safe with the
6 infrastructure that we currently have which, on most
7 streets at best and as Beacon Street is today, just
8 has a striped bike lane. There are many, many more
9 cyclists, or potential cyclists, who would cycle for
10 at least some of their trips if they felt safe and,
11 for them, no kind of plain striped bike lane is ever
12 going to be sufficient.

13 So, where do we go from there? We need
14 separated facilities that will be comfortable and
15 safe for users of a wide range of ability, age and
16 interests. I support the concept of cycle tracks
17 that the City is moving forward with. I want them to
18 push the design forward.

19 I hear the safety and design concerns that
20 are being raised by some, and it is good to hear
21 people thinking deeply about these issues, but these
22 are all things that can be solved during the later
23 parts of the design phase. These are design details
24 and they are ones that are very important and that we

1 are all conscious of. We want a safe facility, but
2 we want one that more people are going to be
3 comfortable riding on, and I think that is what we
4 are going to get with the cycle tracks.

5 We are going to get a more livable
6 neighborhood. We are going to get many more people
7 cycling, of all ages, and that is the trend that we
8 are seeing in other places. Cycle tracks are not a
9 new invention. They have been used in many places
10 for many years and I know that people are concerned
11 because they are relatively new here, but this would
12 be the fifth cycle track in the Boston area.

13 I think, if we want to see the kind of
14 livable community that many of us are talking about,
15 we can't be ruled by fear. We have to be willing to
16 take the next step to make a livable community and we
17 will deal with the safety issues during the rest of
18 the design phase. Thanks very much.

19 BRIAN POLSTOWAIT: Hello. My name is Brian
20 Polstowait. I live at 36 Linden Avenue, two blocks
21 from here. I am a regular commuter down Beacon
22 Street corridor, daily, and I would like to commend
23 the City on showing a vision of what a multi-modal,
24 multi-generational corridor this could be. I would

1 much prefer to live on this street as design here
2 than the one I currently live on, and I live on a
3 pretty nice street.

4 I would like to see this something for
5 everybody, that everybody can use. Most of our
6 designs for the past decades, I don't know when this
7 was last -- Beacon Street was last built, but I am
8 sure it was before my time. They are designed for
9 middle-aged adults, whether they are driving,
10 bicycling, or potentially even walking. This shows
11 something that is designed for all people of all
12 generations, of all abilities.

13 I have three questions that I have, that
14 better answers might improve it. One is, why do the
15 cycle tracks end halfway down the corridor when one
16 of the biggest destinations for cyclists is Inman
17 Square? Two is why do we have so few crosswalks? I
18 don't just bicycle. I walk. I regularly push a
19 stroller and, if you look at these sheets over here,
20 you will notice that many of them don't have a single
21 crosswalk on them. Yet, if you look at the ones from
22 Washington to Inman, there's plenty of them but, from
23 Washington to Oxford, there's very few now.

24 I had a third point, but I don't think it

1 is that important because I forgot it. So, thank
2 you. (applause)

3 MIKE LONETTO: Hi. I am Mike Lonetto. I
4 live at 57 Endicott Avenue in Somerville. I am a
5 relatively recent resident, but I commute most days,
6 at least when there is no ice on the ground, I try
7 to, down to the Kendall Square area, so down through
8 Inman, and see my share of bicycle accidents on the
9 way.

10 So, I have concerns about the -- I have
11 concerns about the safety of the corridor and I see a
12 lot of positive here towards improving safety. I
13 think it is really critical to get the design right
14 so that not just cyclists like me, who are fairly
15 comfortable on the road and going straight down
16 Beacon Street, can use it, so that people who are
17 making left turns and right turns, and the
18 pedestrians whose paths they are crossing can be
19 safe, as well, and I am also concerned, as someone
20 who, say, might want to stop and go to a shop, that
21 there are places to cross the road in order to do
22 that, and that's all. Most of the other points,
23 other folks have made here. I think it is just
24 critical to get it right. (applause)

1 ALEX EPSTEIN: My name is Alex Epstein, E-
2 p-s-t-e-i-n, and I live at 278 Beacon Street. I have
3 been here in the neighborhood for about five years,
4 and I get around Beacon Street many ways. I usually
5 bike to work in Kendall, but often work -- walk to
6 Porter to take the T, and I do rely on the local
7 businesses for most of my everyday needs. So, that
8 is why I love this neighborhood.

9 I am going to make three quick points. One
10 is that Beacon Street is part of a greater plan that,
11 as a whole, the City of Somerville has been putting
12 together. It is called The Comprehensive Plan. The
13 plan is to make sure that at least half of all new
14 trips that are made by new residents of Somerville
15 are not made by car but are made through other
16 choices, walking, transit and bicycling.

17 I would like to make the point that, over
18 the last two years, the Somerville Bicycle Committee,
19 on which I sit, has collected enormous feedback from
20 the Farmer's Markets, the Street Fairs, the Summer
21 Streets that we have attended, and people who use
22 Beacon Street say that they are afraid of the
23 doorings, and that they want their friends and family
24 to be able to ride with them on this corridor. Those

1 are the top two things we hear.

2 I believe that cycle tracks or separated
3 bike facilities address those problems. You are no
4 longer in the door zone, which is the principle
5 hazard today. There are some safety issues that were
6 brought up and I think those are all solvable through
7 proper design and best practices, and I would be
8 happy to talk more about those off line.

9 I think this plan benefits all people, as a
10 general concept. Pedestrians get an extra sidewalk
11 next to the academy that is sorely needed. I do
12 think we absolutely need more crosswalks. That I
13 will say, and motorists will actually not have
14 bicyclists passing each other in the bike lane,
15 entering car traffic, because they will have their
16 own facility. There will be fewer conflicts, not
17 more.

18 I do think that is important, again, I
19 emphasize the crosswalks because people will be
20 parking on one side of the street, so even more than
21 today, they will need to cross the street in a safe
22 and legal manner. So, I would -- I walk Beacon
23 Street every day and I would like to see more
24 crosswalks but, in general, I think this is a great

1 vision and I strongly commend the City for pursuing
2 it. I think we need to hammer out the details, get
3 the best practices, and this will be a model for a
4 bike network for all generations, and a better
5 neighborhood, too. Thank you. (applause)

6 KEN CARLSON: Good evening. My name is Ken
7 Carlson. I live at 221 Beacon Street, and I have
8 been living in Somerville for a little more than
9 three years right now. I am a homeowner. I moved to
10 Somerville specifically because I thought that, as a
11 multi-modal commuter, that it would really fit my
12 wife's and my lifestyle very well. I bike to work
13 down Beacon Street to Kendall every day. My wife
14 walks to work every day. We also have a car we
15 drive, we park in the neighborhood. We use all of
16 the local businesses.

17 As a homeowner, I think that -- I know
18 other people who have moved into Somerville recently,
19 and they are also attracted to Somerville because of
20 these multi-modal facilities for safe travelling
21 either with a car, not a car, taking a bus, taking
22 the T and, as a commuter, bike commuter on Beacon
23 Street, I see all levels of cyclists.

24 I see mostly people who are used to cycling

1 in all conditions, like myself. I see the occasional
2 brave parent with a child, biking down Beacon Street,
3 and they are very brave. They are in the minority.
4 I also see, there is one particular father, who has a
5 little kid up front in a little basket, and the child
6 biking separately behind him has got to be four years
7 old and really not good safety on a street like
8 Beacon Street.

9 I think the cycle track would have -- would
10 make things a lot safer for cyclists of all
11 abilities. As an experienced cyclist, I will use the
12 cycle track. I use cycle tracks now on Vassar Street
13 in Cambridge and on Concord Street in Cambridge. I
14 like them. I find them safe. I think that the
15 current designs that I have seen on Vassar and
16 Concord are good. I think the one I am seeing here
17 on Beacon Street in Somerville is going to be better.

18 I think the cycle tracks in the City are improving
19 and I like the idea of trying to keep families safer,
20 and I think encouraging more people to use cycle
21 tracks and bike will decrease the traffic on Beacon
22 Street.

23 If you imagine three hundred cyclists an
24 hour, who suddenly decide to get in their cars and

1 drive, the traffic would be unbearable on Beacon
2 Street, much more so than it is now. So, I think
3 encouraging more cycling on a safe facility is a
4 better thing for the City and I think accommodations
5 can be made for everybody to make this a win/win for
6 all. Thank you. (applause)

7 TIM TALEN: Hi. My name is Tim Talen. I
8 live on Boston Street in Union Square, but I use
9 Beacon Street often to visit friends, to go to
10 businesses on Beacon, and also to get between Porter
11 and Davis Squares, and Inman, and Kendall Square, and
12 the City of Boston.

13 One of the reasons my wife and I decided to
14 live in Somerville, and to buy a home here, was
15 because of the ability to get around without a car,
16 and because of the City's commitment to pursuing
17 projects like the Beacon Street Cycle Track. I get
18 around primarily by bike, and I hope to continue to
19 be able to do so with my wife and kid, and a place
20 like the Beacon Street shown on these drawings is a
21 place that we would feel comfortable doing that.

22 I would like to thank the City and the
23 State for pursuing this project and showing the
24 vision to do something that is change, and change

1 isn't always easy, but I do think the place that will
2 end up resulting from it will be a better place.

3 Many points have been raised about safety
4 on the cycle track, and I think they can be addressed
5 in the future, past the twenty-five percent design
6 stage. The design has changed significantly so far,
7 based on public input, and that change will continue
8 to happen. I would urge the State and the City to
9 move forward on this design, and those that have
10 specific concerns with the cycle track to stay
11 engaged in this process to make this a model project
12 for the future. Thanks. (applause)

13 PETER YAO: Hi. I am Peter Yao. I have
14 lived in Teal Square for the past years, and have
15 used Beacon Street pretty much every day. I want to
16 thank the City for changing the plan, as I understand
17 it, to accommodate parking on the other side of the
18 street, and also wanted to give three reasons why I
19 support and am excited about this project.

20 So, the first is that it creates a
21 neighborhood that I want to live in. I think a cycle
22 track will promote biking, will get people out in the
23 streets, interacting with each other, get them
24 outside of the steel box so that they talk and

1 interact with each other. I think it addresses the
2 sixty percent of people that might ride but are
3 scared to, and the people that might not be able to
4 afford a car to drive around.

5 Another reason is that I think it improves
6 health. It is an issue that we need to address and
7 habitual exercise improves people's health in a way
8 that has very little work for them to do. I think it
9 improves air quality by reducing cars on the street,
10 and it improves safety for all, as someone that has
11 been hit, doored, on Beacon Street.

12 And then, lastly, I do want to encourage
13 non-motorized modes of transportation. I think --
14 well, I drive, and occasionally park on Beacon
15 Street, but I want to make it as difficult as
16 possible. I think we have a limited number of years
17 ahead of us where we can drive around and support
18 cars in the current way we are used to. So, I think
19 we need to start that change now, and plan for the
20 future but, with that said, I will add one remark
21 about parking and that we should share the parking
22 lot with Star Market because it seems like a big,
23 under-utilized space that I wish could be used better
24 by shared parking. (applause)

1 MARK CHASE: Hi. Good evening. I am Mark
2 Chase. I am a Belmont Street, Somerville, resident,
3 live right behind Star Market, and patronize a lot of
4 businesses on Beacon Street. In particular, I really
5 enjoy Pho 'n Rice and Petsi Pies, and the Rustica
6 Cafe, which I use as kind of an office meeting space.

7
8 I am speaking tonight because my day job is
9 actually, I am a Parking Consultant, who helps
10 universities, hospitals, cities and towns deal with
11 constrained parking and Somerville, like many cities
12 in the United States, doesn't particularly manage its
13 parking very well, and if I thought it was just the
14 tradeoff between parking and cycle tracks, I think it
15 would be -- well, we all think it is a tradeoff
16 between parking and cycle tracks. I actually don't
17 think it is a tradeoff between parking and cycle
18 tracks because I think we can manage the parking we
19 have much better than it has been.

20 I think, though, to do that would require
21 some changes in the way we do things and, when you
22 manage parking, you basically have a couple of tools
23 at your disposal. You can permit parking where you
24 say some people get to use it and other people don't,

1 and that's pretty much what Somerville does, or you
2 can price parking and you can say, let's make the
3 more expensive parking, the more -- the high demand
4 parking more expensive than the low demand.

5 Now, neither one of these are great because
6 we would love to just have lots of parking for
7 everyone but, in an urban environment, that is very
8 difficult. So, I am not going to get into specific
9 policies but I think, with a collaborative approach,
10 we could encourage able-bodied people to walk further
11 to their parking so that the people who really value
12 the close-in parking will get to use it. We can make
13 curbside parking for businesses much more accessible
14 than it is today through proper pricing and time
15 limits, and we can use the parking we have. Someone
16 mentioned the Star Market parking lot. There is lots
17 of off-street parking that could be used better than
18 it is today.

19 This would be a big change. So, it is not
20 going to be easy, but I think we shouldn't let
21 parking stop the vision of the city that we want to
22 see. We should envision a city that we want, and
23 then, make parking work to fit that vision, and --
24 (applause) -- thank you very much.

1 RACHEL EVANS: My name is Rachel Evans, and
2 I believe I am the first female voice you have heard
3 this evening. I am heartened to see there are more
4 behind me. I am a longtime Somerville resident. I
5 commute three seasons of the year by bicycle, down
6 Beacon Street. I commute three seasons of the year
7 down Beacon Street. I also frequent this area on
8 foot and by car.

9 I have two school-age children, and I am
10 not that brave parent. I do sometimes bicycle with
11 my children in the bike lane on Beacon Street, and it
12 terrifies me, and the reason for that is, I have had
13 two accidents myself in this area. One was being hit
14 by the door of a driver getting out of his car, and
15 the other was by a car turning left over a double
16 yellow line and crossing the bike lane. Both of
17 those accidents could happen to my children in the
18 bike lane. I think the cycle track could address
19 that and, therefore, I support this proposal and I
20 commend the Department of Transportation and the City
21 of Somerville for incorporating the cycle track.
22 Thank you. (applause)

23 BRUCE KULIK: Once again, Bruce Kulik, 168
24 Grove Street, Medford, and I have got to say that I

1 am very afraid because, especially with the testimony
2 of the woman just ahead of me, people think that it
3 is going to be safer to be riding on these cycle
4 tracks, as opposed to riding on the street, but you
5 really will have to teach your children all about
6 traffic anyway and, as far as the accident that this
7 woman said she was in, the cycle track will make that
8 worse, the left hooks, the right hooks, it is going
9 to be because people can't see you and it is because
10 people don't ride where they can be seen by the
11 traffic. The bike lane at least allows you to be
12 visible.

13 If you are hugging the right hand side, you
14 are going to be in the door zone. You have to be
15 careful about that and, frankly, dooring is not the
16 worse problem that we have to face. If you look at
17 what has happened in the Boston area, the vast
18 majority of the fatalities that occurred in the past
19 five years have been the result of turning vehicles,
20 primarily right hooks at various places and not the
21 result of something that happens mid-block.

22 So, I think that it is really disingenuous
23 to lead people to believe that the cycle track is
24 going to make it so it is like you are riding on the

1 Minuteman Trail. It just isn't true, and it is
2 fooling people into believing that it is going to be
3 safe for their children to ride, perhaps unattended,
4 on Beacon Street because, again, of all the driveways
5 and the intersections. What is important is to have
6 them learn how to ride properly with you on the
7 street, which I do with my children.

8 Anyhow, I wanted to go on to talk about why
9 the roadway does not conform to the DOT Bicycle
10 Accommodation Standards. Many people are probably
11 not aware that Massachusetts Law requires that
12 bicycles do not have to use a bicycle lane, or any
13 bicycle infrastructure, and so, people will be able
14 to ride in the street if they feel it is unsafe, as
15 some of the other people here have mentioned.

16 However, there are specific guidelines by
17 the DOT and this Mass General Law Chapter 87.
18 Separate accommodations are defined as a bike lane or
19 shoulder, or combination of parking lane or shoulder
20 that is at least thirteen feet wide. Shared bicycle
21 and pedestrian accommodations are defined as a
22 shoulder in the absence of a separate sidewalk.

23 The guidelining goes on specifically to
24 state, where on street parking is provided, shoulders

1 or bicycle lanes should be maintained between on-
2 street parking and a travel lane. That means not on
3 the other side of the cars, and that is really what
4 my concern is, in the area where the cycle track will
5 be on the opposite side of the cars.

6 Unlike many of the cycle tracks that people
7 have quoted, say in Copenhagen, the cycle track
8 crosses numerous private driveways, something that I
9 have taken a look at through Google Street Views in
10 Copenhagen, many, many fewer of those. So, I think
11 that is a big concern with these cycle tracks.

12 I have some other points, but there are
13 still people in line. I will mail in these comments.

14 Thank you for your attention. (applause)

15 CHARLIE DENISON: Hi. My name is Charlie
16 Denison. I live at 25 Union Ave. in Somerville. I
17 use Beacon Street regularly. I walk it. I bike it.

18 I take the 83 bus. I drive my car. I park on it.
19 So, I am very familiar with it, and I use it to get
20 just about anywhere in Cambridge, or downtown, or
21 even just to patronize the businesses there.

22 I would like to say, I fully support the
23 City's current plan, but I encourage them to think
24 bigger. I think cycle tracks, like people have said,

1 have a huge benefit to appealing to families and the
2 young and the old, and it is also great for business
3 because it brings in more customers without putting
4 any additional taxation on parking.

5 I recognize parking is always a contentious
6 issue and it will always be controversial, but like
7 Mark Chase and others have said, there are solutions.

8 It is not an insolvable problem. Through
9 regulations, through pricing, through the better use
10 of off-street spaces, I think this is a solvable
11 problem.

12 Furthering the plan, I would hope the cycle
13 track can go further, as far as possible, hopefully
14 the entire length of the project, if possible, and I
15 know the primary reason the City decided to truncate
16 it at Washington Street was because of the parking
17 study rates east of Washington Street. The reasoning
18 was that, east of Washington Street, the average
19 occupancy was forty-one percent, which was less than
20 fifty but, east of it, it was higher than fifty, but
21 it was sixty-three percent. So, to me, if the
22 occupancy was closer to a hundred, if there were
23 eighty or ninety, or even seventy, I would say maybe
24 it is not possible with regulations to make it work,

1 but it is sixty-three. So, if we can get it down to
2 fifty, I think that is a doable goal.

3 With the cycle track design, I would ask
4 that vertical separation be added on the south side,
5 like there is on the north side, to help separate the
6 cycle track from the sidewalk a little bit more, and
7 I hope that raised crossings could be added to the
8 cycle track at side streets. I know the City has
9 said that funding is an issue, but I hope we can find
10 the money because it really makes the crossing that
11 much safer and that much more comfortable for
12 cyclists.

13 I also echo other people's desire for
14 additional crosswalks west of Washington Street.
15 There's a lot of pedestrians there, particularly at
16 Oxford Street. I know people have been asking for a
17 crosswalk there for a long time, and I hope we can
18 fit it in there.

19 And my last suggestion would be that the
20 pedestrian signals are automatic so you don't have to
21 push the button and hope it works, and wait however
22 long you have to wait. Cambridge uses the automatic
23 signals and they are just, they are so much nicer.
24 You don't feel like you are at the mercy of a button

1 and, also, the pedestrian signals, if they could be
2 make concurrent with a leading pedestrian interview -
3 - interval (applause), that reduces the wait time,
4 and it reduces the wait time for pedestrians and for
5 cars. So, everyone gets through the intersection
6 faster.

7 So, I look forward to what is to come. I
8 fully support the plan, and I hope to see more.
9 Thank you.

10 CHRISTINA: Hi. My name is Christina. I
11 am a Beacon Street resident. I shop on the street
12 but today I would like to talk for the beginning
13 cyclists, the hesitant cyclists you have been hearing
14 so much about. I am not currently in that category.
15 I have finally gotten to the point where I am
16 comfortable.

17 I am a regular Beacon Street commuter but,
18 when I first moved to Somerville five years ago,
19 moved to Beacon Street, I really wanted to bike. I
20 wanted to be able to get across the City quickly, to
21 places that didn't have good public transit access.
22 It is easy to park when I get there. It's healthy.
23 It's good for me. It inexpensive, but I was, you
24 know, the road scared me. The Boston drivers,

1 Somerville drivers, Cambridge drivers scared me, and
2 it took me a long time -- I hadn't biked since I was
3 a kid.

4 It took me a long time to figure out how to
5 ride an adult bike with these hand brakes and gear
6 shifts, and figure out how to ride on the street with
7 cars, and navigate traffic, and how to deal with what
8 happens if the door opens next to me, and what
9 happens if there is a car parked -- stopped in the
10 bike lane, and I need to go around them, and I think
11 it would have made it a lot easier for me to get
12 going quicker if I had had something like a cycle
13 track, and I also know that talking to many of my
14 friends, when I mention that I bicycle, they seem
15 really interested but very scared; and so, starting
16 to build this kind of infrastructure in this area I
17 think is really crucial to moving forward and getting
18 more bicyclists on the road. Thank you. (applause)

19 ETHAN: Hi, everyone. My name is Ethan. I
20 live in Oak Square in Brighton. I am a very avid
21 cyclist. I bike during the fall, spring and summer.
22 I actually bike to and from work during those
23 seasons, all the way to Billerica, to give you an
24 idea. I am a big supporter -- I have experience in

1 transportation with a car, public transportation and
2 the bike, so I understand everyone's point of view.
3 Please understand.

4 I am a big supporter of the bike more
5 because it just creates so much more convenience for
6 me, but what I want to ask from everyone today, no
7 matter what form of transportation you use, is please
8 try to open your minds and be understanding of other
9 people's -- what other people, who use other forms of
10 transportation that you don't use, face. It really
11 creates more open communication and more safety.

12 I support this new project because I think
13 that, in order to improve safety for both drivers,
14 cyclists and people who use public transportation or
15 walk, we have to try new things. We can't just stick
16 with what we are doing and expect only that to work.

17 So, to everyone out there, I just want to --
18 drivers, cyclists, walkers, and public
19 transportation, please stay safe and please watch out
20 for each other. (applause)

21 LINDA EPSTEIN: My name is Linda Epstein.
22 I -- what? Oh, okay. I am a resident of Arlington.
23 I cycle on Beacon Street. I have been cycling on
24 Beacon Street for about fourteen years. I commute in

1 to Kendall Square, and I am also a former Somerville
2 resident. I used to live on Highland, so I know a
3 lot about parking issues and difficulties with
4 parking issues in Somerville, but I would like to
5 say, I support the project in general. As other
6 speakers have mentioned, I think this is a big step
7 in the right direction.

8 Will I use the cycle track all the time?
9 Maybe not. I cycle four seasons a year -- four
10 seasons, and there are times, when there is bad
11 weather, that I would love to have a cycle track. I
12 don't like to ride on the sidewalks but often Beacon
13 Street and other streets are not really safe under
14 certain conditions and this is my chosen, preferred
15 mode of transportation, and I hope that the City and
16 the residents are able to work out the bugs.

17 And I think education is the key to
18 pedestrians, drivers and cyclists getting used to the
19 cycle track signage. Any type of education that the
20 City can provide I think will help. I have used the
21 cycle tracks on Concord Street and Vassar Street, and
22 also going into Brighton, and I enjoy them when I
23 used them.

24 I do feel safer and I think another problem

1 it will prevent is all the double parking of trucks
2 in the bike lanes. (applause) So, bike lanes are
3 basically a place for trucks to double park, and I
4 see the trepidation that beginning cyclists have when
5 trying to figure out how to navigate around a double
6 parked truck on Beacon Street, and I think the cycle
7 track will actually reduce this issue. Thank you.
8 (applause)

9 BARBARA STEINER: Hi. My name is Barbara
10 Steiner. I live in Union Square and I don't bike
11 because I have almost been killed on a bike, or worse
12 than killed. So, I walk a lot, and I would like to
13 give a couple of comments about this.

14 I think this has potential to be very
15 exciting as long as it is safe and as long as some of
16 the parking issues and residential issues can be
17 addressed. I think, if you have a bike -- this bike
18 lane that is being proposed, a lot of people will be
19 coming to the area and stopping at these shops, it
20 could be become kind of an exciting area for people
21 (applause) who might not ordinarily do it, or might
22 just want to get through it as fast as possible
23 because, right now, it is not very attractive, and we
24 all agree the road needs to be improved. I think

1 actually the small businesses might see an
2 improvement, including those little spas because,
3 when you are biking, you need water and juice, and
4 things like that. I remember that when I used to
5 bike. I used to like that.

6 As a walker, I want to just reiterate the
7 need for more crosswalks further up the road towards
8 Porter Square. It is a little frightening to me to
9 see that there are none, and people, pedestrians will
10 use them, and especially with parking that is going
11 to be reduced or even modified, you have got to have
12 more safety for pedestrians to make it more
13 attractive and easier for us to get around.

14 I am also concerned about the interaction
15 between pedestrians and bicyclists because I have
16 been on that end of accidents, as well. So, I want
17 to make sure that this is safe for everybody, that
18 nobody gets in anybody's way because the pedestrians
19 are the slow ones without anything, except their own
20 bodies, to take care of them.

21 And, as for current residents' parking, it
22 is tough. I know. There are sections in the area
23 that are way worse than this. It is frightening to
24 me to think about where people might have to park, if

1 they have to go really far from where they live but I
2 was thinking that maybe some solutions could include
3 people over a certain age -- not everybody is
4 handicapped and can get a handicap spot, who can't --
5 who find it difficult to walk so far to get to their
6 car. So, there may be allowances or some system made
7 for people who are older, who need to park a little
8 closer to where they live, but I think there's not a
9 lot of -- I don't know how many driveways there on
10 Beacon Street in this section because I think that
11 was one of the issues, is people don't have
12 driveways. They don't have a place to put their car.
13 So, I am not sure if driveways in the bike -- the
14 dedicated bike lane is going to be an issue.

15 And again, I think fear is a big -- moves
16 us all, and I think it is important to seize the
17 moment, and I think it could be very exciting if it
18 is done right, and if safety is paramount. Thank you
19 (applause)

20 LYNN MCWHOOD: Hi. I am Lynn McWhood. I
21 live at 45 Edison Street. I had sort of a question.
22 I appears that there is one section of the proposed
23 cycle track in which there will be bus stops adjacent
24 to the bus -- to the cycle track, and it wasn't clear

1 to me how that was going to work. In other words, if
2 you are getting on and off the bus, if there is a
3 cycle track that is raised, presumably, you have to
4 cross the cycle track to get to the sidewalk.

5 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: I think Dave can
6 probably answer that for you, Ma'am.

7 DAVID GIANGRANDE: Again, for the record, I
8 am Dave Giangrande with Design Consultants. As it
9 relates to the bus stop, we are going to work with
10 the MBTA to relocate the bus stops. Two of them are
11 very close to the, probably the one that you are
12 referring to is very close to Park Street. So, we
13 are looking at relocating those onto Park Street, in
14 particular. I think that is probably the bus stop
15 that is in question at this stage.

16 So, again, it is part of the design
17 process. We still have a lot of work to do, but
18 relocating those bus stops in close proximity to
19 where they exist today is something that we will work
20 with the MBTA, and the MBTA is here tonight, as well.

21 I don't know where the person is right now but they
22 are here, Todd Blake from the MBTA.

23 LYNN MCWHOOD: There was one other issue.
24 People keep bringing up the lack of crosswalks

1 between Oxford Street and Sacramento Street. At a
2 hearing a couple of years ago for a hotel that was
3 proposed at the corner of Somerville Ave. and Beacon
4 Street, the then Parking Director insisted that the
5 only place that you could safely add a crosswalk in
6 that segment was at Eustis Street. That still leaves
7 a very long area that you can't cross, and moving all
8 the parking to one side will just make a greater need
9 for people to cross. (applause)

10 JANE BESTOR: My name is Jane Bestor and I
11 live on Lowell Street, and I do not drive, so I walk
12 everywhere. Actually, I have walked everywhere up
13 until a friend, at my advanced age, suggested that I
14 get on a bicycle, and so, I am one of those recent
15 older risk-averse people who is now on wheels
16 (applause) and I have to say that I have been very
17 interested in urban planning in Somerville, and I
18 participated in some of the comprehensive planning
19 sessions, and I think that there has been a concerted
20 effort to try to increase the literacy of Somerville
21 residents about the urban fabric and the way we live
22 and experience it, and it is therefore a great
23 disappointment that the plans really are so
24 inadequate, as one of the early speakers mentioned,

1 for this project because it is a very complex
2 project.

3 It is a very dense urban -- Beacon Street
4 is a very dense street. It has a lot of residences
5 and parking lots coming into it. It is a straight
6 from my house to the Kendall Square Cinema, and to
7 all the places I love to shop in Inman Square and,
8 you know, every place actually from Cafe Rustica on,
9 and I think that it would be a huge mistake to leave
10 some of the critical design issues that have been
11 raised here tonight vaguely to later sessions of the
12 planning process. It seems to me particularly the
13 issues of cycle tracks versus a true designated bus -
14 - bicycle lane really are very serious issues that
15 need to be addressed.

16 As one of those older, risk-averse
17 cyclists, who now loves to cycle, I have to tell you
18 that, if I were a parent and had children, I do have
19 children, they are grown now and they both love to
20 bike, I would be very worried about the cycle tracks.

21 I think that the prime (1:35:42) case for a true
22 designated bike lane would be a much safer option,
23 and I think that really harder work needs to be done.

24 We need to see better plans.

1 I am really grateful to the people who have
2 done a lot of work tonight and come out and really
3 had substantive comments to make on that issue. I
4 don't think these matters should be swept under the
5 carpet and dealt with at later stages when it is too
6 late. The City of Somerville can be wonderfully
7 progressive but it also, as I know from thirty years
8 of living here, has a very long history of moving too
9 fast on projects in which there is a very great stake
10 for a lot of people, and this is the case for the
11 Beacon Street planning. (applause)

12 CHARVAK CARPADE: Hi. My name is Charvak
13 Carpade. I have lived in Cambridge for about
14 thirteen years. Ten years ago, about ten years ago,
15 Cambridge took away half the parking on Memorial
16 Drive. I live near Ames Street, and the entire
17 riverside, I could park on it, and they removed half
18 the parking. So, when that first happened, I was
19 very concerned that I wouldn't have a place to put my
20 car but, somehow, it turned out that parking was the
21 same. It was like not any easier, not any harder,
22 and I think that is because of what economists call
23 demand elasticity. It is sort of, people adapt to
24 whatever their situation is.

1 I never drive to work because I work in
2 Downtown Boston. I drove here tonight because there
3 is free parking, and it is cold out, and I am lazy,
4 but I would have biked if there wasn't free parking,
5 if this was more difficult.

6 I don't really think parking should be free
7 because it is unfair to the people who don't have
8 cars. I live in a building with forty people and
9 there are six parking spots out front on the street.

10 I get it for twenty-five dollars a year from
11 Cambridge, and I park my car there, but there are
12 thirty-four other people in the building who probably
13 pay a hundred and fifty bucks a month for extra
14 space, for a five by ten storage unit, and it just
15 doesn't seem like an efficient use of resources to
16 allow me to put my car there all year round,
17 occupying all that space, and it -- when I could
18 really just get rid of it and ride a bike.

19 So, yes, I just wanted to point that out as
20 some people feel entitled to having free parking, but
21 that doesn't seem fair. Thank you. (applause)

22 SAM COREN: My name is Sam Coren. I live
23 at 29 Forest Street, right off Beacon Street, a
24 little nub that is actually in Somerville, but most

1 of my street is in Cambridge, making parking kind of
2 a nightmare, but I don't want to talk about parking
3 too much. I want to talk about data.

4 Somerville is a city that prides itself on
5 making decisions with data, the best data we have,
6 and there are two pretty glaring omissions in the
7 Design Exception Report and some of the plans the
8 City has submitted, and something that I actually
9 want to commend the Boston Cyclists Union on. I know
10 I have been butting heads with a lot of you guys, but
11 I do appreciate some of the work you do, and some of
12 the work the Somerville Bike Committee does in
13 getting more people to bike, and trying to make them
14 bike safer.

15 There was a huge push after these fatal
16 accidents on Comm Ave., to get police data
17 description of accident reports on the cycling
18 accidents, and there just wasn't any narrative for
19 what kinds of cycling accidents were happening on
20 Beacon Street at all. There were counts. There was
21 a little crash map, but really nothing that described
22 what happened, was it dooring, was it a hook, was it
23 the drunk guy texting on his bike that crashed out in
24 front of David's house and hit a car? These are

1 really the things we need to know to design better
2 infrastructure. Otherwise, we are just kind of
3 designing things haphazardly and very blindly.

4 And to some of the cycling advocates that
5 talked about the studies in depth, we really need to
6 take away what the lessons they learned were. As
7 someone pointed out, well, if we did all the cycle
8 track best practices, we would really only have a
9 cycle track that went from Park Street to Washington,
10 and originally that's what I thought this cycle track
11 was going to be. People said, hey, unused parking on
12 Beacon Street, obviously, the meters no one uses
13 anymore.

14 So, you know, not to rehash all the pain
15 about parking but there is data on the number of
16 resident permits issued for Somerville and there
17 hasn't been anything from Traffic and Parking
18 regarding any of these plans, and it can't be even
19 that hard to get that done. I mean, even if you
20 don't own a car, you still get two visitor passes.
21 So, that is something that should be taken into
22 account.

23 And as for the small businesses, I thought
24 it was a nice gesture of Boston Cyclists Union and

1 Livable Streets to try to do a customer intercept
2 survey, to get an idea of business parking usage, but
3 resident parking usage is also important because
4 there's going to be at least two or three handicap
5 parking spaces that are going to go away, and we
6 don't really know how big of a deal that is. I mean,
7 to some people, a car is their only sense of mobile
8 freedom.

9 I mean, I had a friend that died at twenty-
10 two from a congenital heart defect, and the one time
11 he felt free was when he got his license. So, you
12 know, you don't necessarily even need to be a
13 handicapped resident. We have visitors. My mom, she
14 can't get around by foot as much anymore and, if that
15 parking is gone, she is probably not going to drive
16 up and visit me anymore, and there are just similar
17 stories.

18 So, I mean, you think, oh, you know, let's
19 not subsidize free personal car storage, but we are a
20 community. We are people here and we have to really
21 understand, with the best data we can, quantitative,
22 qualitative, getting what is out there so we can
23 design the best Beacon Street. (applause)

24 CLAUDIA MULLEN: I am glad the DOT came

1 here tonight to listen to some of us, although, I am
2 just wondering --

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (inaudible comment)

4 CLAUDIA MULLEN: My name is Claudia Mullen.

5 I am glad the DOT came here tonight to listen to
6 some of us, but my concern is that they are just
7 going through the motions and that they are not
8 really listening and they are not going to take our
9 concerns seriously.

10 I have nothing against bicycles, nothing
11 against cars. I drive a car. I very rarely ride a
12 bicycle, but I think it is great that other people
13 do, and I would like to echo what that woman just
14 said. I think, with a little more diligence, we can
15 come up with something that can make most everybody
16 happy but, before the DOT goes forward, I think they
17 need to do their homework and do some due diligence.

18 We spent, the taxpayer in this room, spent
19 twenty-two million dollars on Somerville Ave. design.

20 David Giangrande did that design. He does every
21 single design that the DOT gets involved, with this
22 City, every single one. You can go to the DOT
23 website and check it out.

24 Twenty-two million dollar taxpayer funded

1 project on Somerville Ave. I have never seen more
2 traffic in the close to thirty years that I have been
3 here (applause) since after David Giangrande designed
4 it and ruined it, and now I have traffic going from
5 Park Street, at the intersection of Park and
6 Somerville Ave., all the way down to the end of
7 Beacon, and two hours a day you cannot turn from
8 Beacon Street onto Park Street because there is
9 already a car all the way at the end.

10 And when I called DOT and asked them to
11 explain that to me, oh, no, that's not in the design.

12 We will just have to look at that. I said, well, I
13 knew it wasn't in the design but it is on the street,
14 and it is only two years old, twenty-two million
15 dollars we paid for that to happen. It never
16 happened that way before. That actually means I
17 cannot pull out of my driveway from between four
18 o'clock and about six thirty.

19 David Giangrande is doing Assembly Row. He
20 is doing Beacon Street, McGoon Square, Union Square.

21 I mean, he does everything. Who is this guy? I
22 don't understand it. When you have the bidding
23 process, in Mass. General Law, it is supposed to mean
24 that, statistically, one person can't get every

1 single job. This makes no sense to me.

2 None of these documents over here have a
3 seal on them. Mass. General Law, Chapter 112,
4 Section 81M, it's a short little law, some of you
5 could pull it right up on your desktops right now, on
6 your laptops.

7 Now, David Giangrande just raised his
8 finger and said, two minutes, because he doesn't like
9 what I am saying. Other people got to finish. I
10 would like to finish. (applause) Thank you.

11 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: This is not
12 about David Giangrande.

13 CLAUDIA MULLEN: But you didn't cut other
14 people at two minutes.

15 DAVID GIANGRANDE: I am just saying it's
16 two minutes. I didn't say you had to stop.

17 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Everyone got two
18 minutes. You have two minutes.

19 CLAUDIA MULLEN: No, everybody didn't get
20 two minutes. Some people got longer.

21 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Okay, go ahead,
22 continue.

23 CLAUDIA MULLEN: So, there isn't -- Chapter
24 -- Mass. General Law, Chapter 112, Section 81 -- I

1 don't speak for him. I speak for myself. Mass.
2 General Law, Chapter 112, Section 81M says that
3 anytime a land surveyor, an architect or a
4 professional civil engineer submits anything to a
5 state agency, it has to be stamped with their state-
6 issued seal. Not one document up there, with all
7 those photographs on there, has a state-issued seal
8 on it, and David Giangrande's name is not on any of
9 it, and I am not sure why a meeting was called when
10 he is not taking ownership of those documents in
11 terms of the way the law required. That is a
12 violation of his license.

13 And is there a land surveyor assigned to
14 this job? When I called the Division of Professional
15 Licensure, they said that, with this much work, with
16 this much reconstruction, a land surveyor should be
17 assigned because of all the residential, all of the
18 commercial, the mixed use properties and the fact
19 that there's ninety-nine easements being required,
20 even though they are temporary, a land surveyor, not
21 a hundred year old plot plan, that a land surveyor
22 did a hundred years ago, but a current land surveyor
23 should be assigned to this.

24 I asked Mr. Frank Suszynski from District

1 4, and he laughed at me when I asked him that
2 question, but they didn't laugh at me at the State.
3 They said they were very concerned about it. He
4 didn't answer my question when I asked him if there
5 was a land surveyor assigned to this.

6 And I am also concerned about brick
7 crosswalks. I don't see any wheelchairs here, but
8 people in wheelchairs have spoken publicly that those
9 brick crosswalks that David Giangrande put on
10 Somerville Ave. cause vibration to people in
11 wheelchairs and they are dead set against it. They
12 have asked us not to use them. Arlington, Cambridge
13 and Boston do not use the brick crosswalks. I don't
14 know why we are trying to put people who have the
15 guts to go out in wheelchairs at a disadvantage. I
16 think that's very unfair in Somerville. I refuse to
17 have my tax dollars -- excuse me -- I am very -- I
18 refuse to have my tax dollars to pay for a brick
19 crosswalk that people in wheelchairs are dead set
20 against. There has been extensive writing on this in
21 The Globe and in other places. You can look this up.

22
23 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Okay. I am
24 going to ask you to wrap it up. You can come back

1 and --

2 CLAUDIA MULLEN: Yes, I am just --

3 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: I want to give
4 everybody an opportunity.

5 CLAUDIA MULLEN: Yes. I would like my
6 questions answered, and I think that's pretty much
7 it.

8 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Thank you.

9 CLAUDIA MULLEN: So, am I -- (applause) I
10 just went on the record. Whose is going to answer my
11 questions and when will they answer them? I want to
12 know about a land surveyor. I want to know about the
13 seal. I want to know about -- you know, I want to
14 know -- I want the answers to my questions.

15 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: We will work
16 with the City and get back to you. How's that?

17 CLAUDIA MULLEN: No, I want my questions to
18 come to me. Pat Jehlen is here, and I would like her
19 to know who is going to answer my questions.

20 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: We will work
21 together with the City, and we will answer your
22 questions.

23 CLAUDIA MULLEN: I am not the City. I am
24 me. I came to a public meeting.

1 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Yes.

2 CLAUDIA MULLEN: Who are you that I am
3 speaking to on the record?

4 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Shawn Holland,
5 MassDOT.

6 CLAUDIA MULLEN: Mr. Holland, I would like
7 to know who is going to answer my questions. I came
8 here, gave my name, spoke in a public meeting, which
9 was publicly noticed. I want the answers to my
10 questions -- I don't want intermediaries.

11 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: I don't have the
12 answers to your questions because I don't work with
13 the City. I --

14 CLAUDIA MULLEN: Will you answer my
15 questions directly?

16 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: I will work with
17 the City and we will get back to you.

18 CLAUDIA MULLEN: That is inappropriate
19 because I don't want to go through the City. I want
20 to go directly to you.

21 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: I don't have the
22 answer, Ma'am. I don't have the answer. I don't
23 know what you are talking about, so I have to talk to
24 the City.

1 CLAUDIA MULLEN: Will you get back to me
2 with your answers?

3 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Yes.

4 CLAUDIA MULLEN: You will?

5 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Yes.

6 CLAUDIA MULLEN: Thank you. (applause)

7 RON NEWMAN: Hi. My name is Ron Newman. I
8 live at 18 Day Street in Davis Square, but I used to
9 -- when I first moved to Somerville, I lived at 48
10 Kent Street, which is just off Beacon Street. I am a
11 member of the Somerville Bicycle Committee and I
12 generally support the plan but I think it is
13 important to make some accommodation with the Star
14 Market to relocate the parking that is being removed
15 from the street into the unused parking lot because
16 my understanding is that that parking lot is only
17 about one-third used, even at its most busy and the
18 City should make some lease arrangement as they do in
19 Davis Square, to allow residents and visitors to park
20 there. If that is taken care of, I fully support the
21 cycle track.

22 Mostly, though, I wanted to talk about
23 pedestrian issues because the plan that is being
24 shown here really is not a complete street because it

1 has no -- it has -- right now, there is a crosswalk
2 at the corner of Kent, Museum and Beacon Street.
3 Right now, there is a traffic light with a push
4 button and there is a crosswalk. This plan takes
5 that out. I don't think that makes sense to take
6 that out. That is a heavily used crosswalk, and I
7 don't think it necessarily still needs to have a
8 light but there still needs to be a crosswalk at that
9 location and this has been told to the engineer a few
10 times. I am not quite sure why it is not yet in the
11 plan.

12 Also, there needs to be a crosswalk at
13 Oxford Street. That is a place where a lot of people
14 need to cross Beacon, and there should be at least
15 one somewhere between Oxford and Sacramento. If
16 these issues are taken care of, I think you have got
17 a great plan but you can't ignore the needs of
18 pedestrians in this corridor. Thank you. (applause)

19 ASTRA DODDS: I know by now this is a very
20 finicky microphone, so I hope I can -- you tell me if
21 I am not doing it right. My name is Astra Dodds. I
22 live on Wendell Street, Cambridge, where I have lived
23 a block and a half from Beacon Street for forty
24 years. I have been crossing Beacon Street to reach

1 the Star Market and now Petsi for at least that long.

2 I often walk Beacon Street to Porter Square and the
3 Porter Square T because I find walking along Beacon
4 Street is much more pleasant than upheaved and shady
5 Oxford Street.

6 I object to adding a cycle track to the
7 Beacon Street Reconstruction Project. The greater
8 safety this cycle track buys the cyclist is an
9 illusion. The increased danger of cyclist/pedestrian
10 conflict is real. Walking is the only way I
11 experience Beacon Street. So, I am a really keen
12 student of bicyclist behavior/pedestrian behavior and
13 motorist behavior or I wouldn't be here to talk to
14 you tonight.

15 I am a longtime member of WalkBoston, and I
16 served on the Cambridge Pedestrian Advisory Committee
17 for five years, although these opinions I express
18 tonight are my own. I have spent most of the last
19 twenty years lobbying for alternative transportation,
20 particularly walking and public transportation.

21 There are two wonderful improvements on the
22 plan, which is reconfiguring the top of Oxford, so
23 there is a continuous sidewalk and motorists have to
24 signal a right turn onto Oxford, which will help

1 everybody. Also, adding the crosswalk along the
2 American Academy of Arts and Sciences is a wonderful
3 development, but there are seven crosswalk problems
4 that need fixing.

5 For Beacon Street to be a complete street,
6 it has to work well for pedestrians, as well for
7 pedestrians as it does for everyone else.
8 Pedestrians don't care about the -- do care about the
9 quality of sidewalks along the roadway, but they care
10 equally about the perennial question, how did the
11 chicken cross the road, which is the way you have to
12 approach it on Beacon Street.

13 As I walked from the crosswalk at the
14 bridge down to the crosswalk at Sacramento Street
15 twice last week and timed it, it was ten minutes,
16 which means it is a half mile, which certainly
17 doesn't meet the standards for the frequency of
18 crosswalks in an urban environment. When the T was
19 talking about building -- bidding out the air rights
20 over the railroad tracks along Somerville Ave., we
21 were told that there are thirty thousand people who
22 live within a mile walk of Porter Square, and that
23 gives you some clue to the density along Beacon
24 Street.

1 The -- so, adding crosswalks -- but I don't
2 necessarily think it has to be right at Oxford
3 Street. I think somewhere down Oxford would be
4 better because of the rate at which motor vehicles
5 come over the bridge would make it very difficult.

6 The Sacramento Street crosswalk needs to
7 stay where it is. I have told the idea was to move
8 to it, to line it up better with the underpass. The
9 underpass, I have long believed, needed to be
10 promoted. It needs to be promoted with a mural on
11 the side Petsi's building, not by moving the
12 crosswalk. The crosswalk where it is not, at
13 O'Sullivan's, lines up perfectly with a break in the
14 Star Market fence. Seventy-five percent of the
15 people who cross there are headed to Star Market. If
16 you didn't catch that on the pedestrian count, it is
17 because of the wrong time of day or the wrong time of
18 the week, but it has been there for forty years and
19 it represents a pedestrian desire line.

20 The Museum -- you know, I understand that,
21 you know, I understand, I am not here to talk about
22 parking and the fear of beginning cyclists. I am
23 here to represent pedestrians and pedestrians, I
24 really, I have spent two days working on what I was

1 going to say tonight and I am going to go as fast as
2 I can, but I am going to insist that pedestrian
3 issues that I have identified, that I give a synopsis
4 view of what they are. (applause)

5 The Museum Street crosswalk, and never mind
6 the fact that the gender imbalance is here, so is the
7 mode of transportation imbalance. The Museum Street
8 crosswalk should not be eliminated. Maybe it doesn't
9 have to be signalized, but it also represents a
10 desire line.

11 All the signalized Beacon Street
12 intersections should have automatic walk cycles, at
13 least at Scott and Park, and Kirkland/Washington, and
14 they should also -- yes, automatic -- no signalized
15 intersection should require pedestrians to wait more
16 than ninety seconds. That was a goal that the
17 Cambridge Director of Traffic and Parking set in
18 Cambridge. So now, if you ever have to wait more
19 than ninety seconds in Cambridge, you let me know and
20 I will let her know. It must be achievable because
21 she wants traffic to move, too.

22 The current plan to pave all marked
23 crosswalks with reddish brown pavers edged in granite
24 undermines pedestrian safety and flies in the face of

1 current standards for crosswalk design, as the woman
2 earlier mentioned. Now, I understand it has become
3 something of a Somerville citywide policy to build
4 crosswalks like this, but nobody else is doing it
5 that way. To be visible at night, crosswalks need to
6 be marked in bright white reflective strips that are
7 slip and trip resistant.

8 This color and pattern is the symbol for
9 pedestrians crossing most easily recognized by fast
10 moving cyclists and distracted drivers. It is the
11 pattern that best illuminates pedestrian presence in
12 the crosswalk, especially night. Granite edging in
13 crosswalks is a slip hazard. Crosswalks are
14 technically a safety device and should not be
15 camouflaged or decorated in the name of street
16 beautification (applause) and, if you want to see an
17 example of a place where it was done and then had to
18 be ripped up, look at the intersection of my street,
19 Wendell, and Oxford, where there is a raised
20 intersection that was paved in red pavers, and it --
21 motorists did not recognize it as a crosswalk. It
22 has now been ripped up on four sides, so it could be
23 laid with asphalt and white stripes. That is at very
24 great expense.

1 I am dismayed to hear that there is any
2 plan to tinker with public transportation on Beacon
3 Street. I worked for about a year to try to get the
4 83 bus back on Beacon Street where it originally was
5 until the railroad bridge became too weak, and that
6 plan failed. So, it -- every time public
7 transportation gets tinkered with on Beacon Street, I
8 get worried.

9 But, for the cycle track, it is a
10 particular concern for me, and it doesn't have to do
11 with parking. It has to do with the fact that casual
12 cyclists ride four times faster than people walk.
13 Cycling advocates lobbied hard for bicycles to be
14 made legally deemed vehicles, largely to establish
15 their right to ride in the road. Taking cyclists off
16 the road and putting them on what amounts to a
17 sidewalk is a step backwards for both cyclists and
18 pedestrians. People who mount a bicycle or get
19 behind the wheel of a car --

20 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Excuse me. I
21 don't want to interrupt you --

22 ASTRA DODDS: Okay, but you do --

23 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: I -- can you --

24 ASTRA DODDS: I will do it faster.

1 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: It is just not
2 fair. These people are waiting here. I just want to
3 give everybody an opportunity.

4 ASTRA DODDS: I understand but if it is all
5 -- if it is about more parking versus teaching a
6 scared bicyclist to ride, I insist the pedestrians
7 have a little --

8 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: I am with you a
9 hundred percent.

10 ASTRA DODDS: Okay.

11 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Okay, thank you.

12 ASTRA DODDS: Twenty-five percent of
13 Americans have a disability of some kind, which is
14 not always obvious. How can pedestrians with
15 disabilities, which might include limited vision,
16 mobility, hearing or cognitive processing skills, and
17 that includes young children, manage to safely
18 coexist with fast moving bicycles on a cycle track
19 that looks like a sidewalk.

20 The way that the cycle track is separated
21 from the sidewalk includes no physical barrier to
22 cyclists moving into the sidewalk, nor any for young
23 children or dogs to go into the path of the cyclist.

24 I, personally, do everything I can not to share the

1 same elevation with cyclists, and I -- the cycle
2 track seems like just a step short of encouraging
3 sidewalk cycling which, as someone pointed out, when
4 you put in a short cycle track, what happens at
5 either end? It seems to me that it practically
6 invites people to continue on ordinary sidewalks when
7 they run out of cycle track, and I don't think visual
8 barriers count, the trees and the trash cans, and
9 never mind the trash on trash day.

10 Side -- and also the speed limit thing.
11 Sidewalk cycling, there has been a lot of discussion
12 about the speed limits. Sidewalk cycling speed
13 limits are a fiction. They are a placebo doled out
14 to lull pedestrians into making life safer for
15 cyclists at pedestrians' expense, and wider sidewalks
16 don't make it easier to share, either.

17 Anyway, I don't -- I guess I need to move
18 on to here. The frequently changing conditions of a
19 cycle track including one of the most common ways in
20 which cyclists are hit by cars is called Offroad
21 Rideout, and it involves crossing driveways and side
22 streets from a direction in which motor vehicles
23 don't expect you to come, and I can't see the
24 difference between the cycle track and a sidewalk in

1 this case. It seems to me that, even by the cycling
2 statistics that exists, it sets up a very dangerous
3 situation.

4 I think vehicles, motorized and non-
5 motorized, belong in the roadway, a roadway that is
6 made safe for all users, and that the cycle track
7 plan, as I understand it, is too short, too
8 discontinuous, and it essentially puts -- requires me
9 to walk along Beacon Street sharing a space with
10 cyclists from which I am not protected the way I am
11 when there is a street where they belong. Thank you
12 very much. (applause)

13 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Unless somebody
14 has something new to add, I know it is getting late
15 and people are getting a little tired. Some people
16 are complaining, we are hearing the same thing over
17 and over again. If you really want to speak, this is
18 your last opportunity, and I think we will start
19 winding it down, if people don't mind. Thank you.

20 JAMES BAKAS: Good evening. My name is
21 James Bakas. I am a resident of Somerville. I live
22 at 4 Webster Ave. in Union Square. My previous
23 addresses, for the past three years, have been in
24 Somerville and Cambridge. I lived off of Eustis

1 Street and I lived off of Albion Street, right on the
2 corner of Albion, Cedar and Somerville.

3 So, I am also a worker/owner of Boston
4 Collective Delivery. It is a bicycle messenger
5 service that serves the Boston Metropolitan area. I
6 spend about eight hours -- over eight hours a day on
7 the streets throughout Boston, Somerville, Cambridge,
8 doing point-to-point deliveries within time
9 constraints, but I would like to show my solidarity
10 with all vulnerable road users, include cyclists,
11 pedestrians, handicapped, and special needs users of
12 the City's infrastructure.

13 I say in solidarity with them because I
14 have been hit by cars in Boston and have been doored
15 in the Somerville area, as well. So, I have that
16 empathy. I don't know how many of you have been hit
17 by a car or have experienced physical accidents, or
18 anything like that. It is a very traumatic
19 experience, not only physically but emotionally, and
20 I would like to address the DOT and City about the
21 importance of continuing forward and considering the
22 cycle track a part of the plan for Beacon Street. I
23 believe that, with the input that is received this
24 evening, and from last week, the City should consider

1 proper safety modifications to the current plan that
2 will address everyone's concerns.

3 But I would also like to, in closing,
4 address something that people have been raising, but
5 no one has really kind of spoken about, the parking
6 problem that people are saying a third of the parking
7 removal is in fact for pedestrian safety to add
8 sidewalk along the Academy so that pedestrians no
9 longer have to walk in the road next to moving cars
10 and trucks. Some fifteen to twenty additional spaces
11 are illegal spots at corners and crosswalks that must
12 disappear regardless of whether there is a cycle
13 track. Another thirty of these spaces to be removed
14 east of Avala Street are metered and hardly used.
15 Therefore, the only removal of thirty to thirty-five
16 reasonably used legal parking spaces, a third of the
17 total, has anything to do with the cycle track. Yes,
18 sorry about that. Yes. If anyone has any questions,
19 I will be other there. (applause)

20 ALAN MOORE: I will be very quick. My name
21 is Alan Moore. I live four houses up here on Cherry
22 Street. I am on the Bicycle Committee in Somerville,
23 but I am just speaking for myself right now. I drive
24 and bike and park and shop on Beacon Street, and I

1 think that this, the design that has been proposed
2 and is being reviewed here is a good and fair
3 distribution of the use of a very narrow right-of-
4 way, sixty-six feet, between cars, bicyclists, parked
5 cars, pedestrians, and I trust that the details of
6 the final design can be worked out to make this a
7 safe corridor for all. Thank you. (applause)

8 DEBBIE GAYLIFF: Hi. My name is Debbie
9 Gayliff. I live in Cambridge on Hammond Street, near
10 Beacon Street. I am also a member of the Cambridge
11 Pedestrian Committee, although I am speaking for
12 myself. So, I am a pedestrian. I walk a lot on
13 Beacon Street, across Beacon Street. I really want
14 the Museum Street crosswalk and signal to remain
15 because, even when Beacon Street is redone, it is not
16 going to be that great to walk on. It is a bigger
17 street. So, I really need to be able to cross. I
18 would just as soon keep the Sacramento Street
19 crosswalk where it is because I go to the Star
20 Market, too, and we really need more crosswalks north
21 of Sacramento Street, particularly at Oxford Street.

22 I am also a cyclist. I am very much in
23 favor of a cycle track. This whole area doesn't have
24 enough cycle tracks. We tried to get one on Huron

1 Avenue. It doesn't seem to come in Cambridge, and I
2 think it is wonderful that Somerville is trying to
3 put one in. There may be problems. I think that it
4 really does have to be distinguished with a sidewalk.

5 It is not a sidewalk. A different level would help.

6 A different color would help, and I gather there is
7 going to be stuff in between, street furniture,
8 maybe, or a post, or something.

9 And lastly, I would like to say, the end of
10 Museum Street, which I know is not technically part
11 of this project, but the Somerville end of Museum
12 Street is in just as bad shape, the surface, as
13 Beacon Street is. It is horrible, horrible for
14 driving. It is horrible for riding a bike on and, if
15 it is not done now, it is going to be like an orphan.

16 It is separate. Cambridge, we did Museum Street up
17 to the Somerville line and it is going to be done on
18 Beacon Street, so there is going to be this little
19 bumpy area and, if there is any way it could be
20 included, that would be great. Thank you.

21 (applause)

22 ILYANNA COBBLERS: Good evening. My name
23 is (Ilyanna Cobblers) and I live on Beacon Street,
24 305 and 307. I have business and my main concern is

1 parking because the clients come in to the shop and
2 they won't be able to park. So, I am happy that the
3 street is going to be done but I am sad because I
4 will probably lose so many parking spots and I will
5 not be able to accommodate my customers. So, I am
6 hoping that you will give some consideration about
7 that. So, thank you, and I hope that something
8 happens for us. (applause)

9 PAT JEHLLEN: I am Pat Jehlen. I live on
10 Dane Street, two blocks from Beacon Street. I have
11 lived there for forty-five years, and I have been on
12 Beacon Street in some form or another almost every
13 day and my granddaughters also bike and cycle to
14 Porter Square. So, I want to say that I am really
15 grateful to Shawn Holland for your patience and your
16 work, and to other people from DOT for coming
17 tonight, and all the people in Somerville who have
18 worked so hard and taken so much interest in this
19 project.

20 The people who live and work, and travel
21 along Beacon Street have waited for this project for
22 almost fifteen years. There are many perspectives on
23 Beacon Street, but we all agree that fixing the
24 surface is the first and best thing you can do. I

1 used to cycle on Beacon Street and I would go again
2 in two conditions. One is if it is somewhat close to
3 flat and, second, if the weather would get a little
4 better. One of those, we have a little more control
5 over.

6 I understand that the people who live and
7 work, and own businesses along the northern end of
8 Beacon Street have legitimate concerns, and my
9 concerns with theirs continue about the parking
10 because they will lose not just half, more than half
11 of the parking spaces there, more than half because
12 of the other illegal parking spaces that will be
13 removed, but also because they street sweeping twice
14 a month when there is no parking on northern Beacon
15 Street. So, that concerns me but those are not
16 issues that this Department of Transportation can or
17 should address. Those are issues for the City to
18 address.

19 So, as you have heard tonight, there is
20 disagreement among residents, businesses,
21 pedestrians, and all kinds of people about the
22 proposed cycle tracks. Some people, and I don't
23 believe they are in this room, think that cycle
24 tracks should be everywhere, and other people, and I

1 don't think they are in this room, think that cycle
2 tracks should be nowhere. The question is, we all
3 want -- what we all want is the safest solution for
4 everyone, and we disagree, and there are technical
5 reasons that we disagree.

6 So, I am so grateful that we can all turn
7 to the neutral experts and engineers at the
8 Department of Transportation, who have read the
9 studies, who have read the recommendations, who have
10 read the standards, and who have looked at Beacon
11 Street, and this is so important, block-by-block,
12 foot-by-foot. Beacon Street is not Concord Avenue.
13 Beacon Street is not Vassar Street. Beacon Street is
14 not Dane Street. Beacon Street is Beacon Street, and
15 you will look at that block-by-block, and try to make
16 it not just perceived as safer, but safer for
17 everybody, and I am so glad that we can count on you,
18 having taken all of our input, and done the best
19 professional job you can. (applause)

20 LAUREN CLAYTON: Thank you. I am going to
21 be very brief. I am the author -- my name is Lauren
22 Clayton. I live on Kenwood Street. I am the author
23 of this particular document that was left on several
24 of the tables. If you have questions about that,

1 please see me afterwards.

2 Otherwise, I would like to raise four brief
3 points. Do we have a right to travel at thirty miles
4 an hour on this street?

5 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: You mean motor
6 vehicles?

7 LAUREN CLAYTON: Yes, or anybody. Do we
8 have a right to thirty miles an hour?

9 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: What's the
10 posted speed limit? I am not sure.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's thirty.

12 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: The eighty-fifth
13 percentile is twenty-eight to thirty-one miles per
14 hour, so yes. Yes, thirty miles an hour.

15 LAUREN CLAYTON: Thank you. Do we have a
16 right to use four lanes on a road that was designed
17 for four lanes, like Broadway, Somerville Ave.,
18 Beacon Street? That's an open question.

19 If we were really serious about safety
20 versus convenience, we would go to a bike trail, rip
21 down some houses, put it directly in and don't mix
22 two competing modes and, otherwise, this is not
23 sharing. There is no sharing going on in the winter
24 or at night. It is not shared back so that regular

1 vehicles can use it.

2 My last question, what are we doing about
3 contraflow? Are we going on the sidewalk? Are we
4 going into the street? And the mountable curbs don't
5 work. They are unsafe. Thank you. (applause)

6 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: I think we are
7 almost at the end.

8 MARK KAEPPLEIN: Mark Kaepplein, Arlington,
9 Massachusetts. I have mostly questions. I wish Pat
10 Jehlen was correct that good design and data was used
11 to design these roadways, but it seems like it isn't.

12 Planning departments and city leaders seem to be
13 directing designs of projects and the engineers just
14 follow their direction and carry out their design
15 goals, and not based on what residents want or shows
16 is the safest or most practical, and I am concerned
17 about a number of things.

18 How does a seven foot wide parking lane
19 work out with a ten foot and a half wide MBTA bus?
20 Is that a safe thing? Yes.

21 DAVID GIANGRANDE: Shall we take that?

22 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Sure.

23 DAVID GIANGRANDE: The question is, how
24 does a -- essentially a bus park along Beacon Street.

1 I think I answered that a little bit earlier that we
2 are working with the MBTA to remove the buses from
3 that section where there is a cycle track. So, where
4 the buses do -- will remain will be in the same
5 condition as it is today, and then, adjacent to the
6 cycle track, those bus routes will be moved to the
7 adjacent street, Park Street essentially.

8 MARK KAEPPLEIN: So, that is going to
9 reduce service for the residents.

10 DAVID GIANGRANDE: No, it will not reduce
11 service for the residents.

12 MARK KAEPPLEIN: Okay, and the garbage
13 trucks, are they going to drive down the bike track
14 to empty the trash, or collect the trash on the bike
15 track?

16 DAVID GIANGRANDE: Do you want me to answer
17 that?

18 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Yes, go ahead.
19 Help me. I assume it is going to be on the street.
20 I don't know if they have manual or they have the
21 arms.

22 DAVID GIANGRANDE: They don't the arms. It
23 is essentially the same way they do it today.

24 MARK KAEPPLEIN: Alright, and were there

1 alternate designs presented per the Massachusetts
2 Design Guide for this street, for residents to select
3 amongst?

4 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: No.

5 MARK KAEPPLEIN: And it is also a Federal
6 requirement for many of the funding, the Federal
7 Government requires alternate design choices be
8 submitted and presented to the public.

9 DAVID GIANGRANDE: Sure. As I had
10 mentioned in my presentation earlier, there was the
11 original twenty-five percent design, then it went to
12 seventy-five percent. There was a modified that
13 occurred in April, and then there was another
14 modified design in -- last summer, in July, and then,
15 finally, some revisions and supplemental information
16 was submitted in December.

17 MARK KAEPPLEIN: So, that would be no.

18 DAVID GIANGRANDE: They were all -- that
19 would be yes. They were all different.

20 MARK KAEPPLEIN: Alright. A number of
21 people said that cyclists increase business
22 patronage. Is there any data showing that, if a loss
23 of a hundred parking spaces is more than made up for
24 by an unknown increase in cyclists?

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: There was a study
2 that was done in New York, along one of the cycle
3 tracks in Manhattan. They found that business had
4 increased.

5 MARK KAEPPLEIN: Okay.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (inaudible comment)

7 MARK KAEPPLEIN: Okay.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It is different, but
9 I mean, it is (inaudible phrase - more than one
10 person speaking at once) -- whether or not this is --

11 MARK KAEPPLEIN: Alright. We are saying it
12 is weak, and the other question I have is, for the
13 bike tracks on, say, Concord Ave., did accidents go
14 down at all for any of the bike tracks in the Boston
15 area?

16 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: I don't have any
17 data on that. I don't know if the City of Cambridge
18 conducted before and after accident data.

19 MARK KAEPPLEIN: So, there is not before
20 information, okay. Okay, thank you. (applause)

21 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Alright. I want
22 to thank you, everybody. What I do is encourage you
23 again to continue working with the City in terms of
24 advancing design. There are a lot of technical

1 questions here I think need to be worked out as the
2 design moves forward.

3 Parking it seemed that primarily was a big
4 issue tonight. Again, from a MassDOT perspective, we
5 have no jurisdiction over parking, but we will
6 continue to work with the City to make sure the
7 design is safe for all roadway users, for
8 pedestrians, for bicyclists, and so, we will continue
9 to do that and, if you have any questions, there is a
10 little handout in the back. You can send the
11 questions in to us or you can send them in to the
12 City.

13 I don't know if there are going to be any
14 additional meetings going forward with the City or,
15 Dave, do you know? Not sure.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (inaudible comment)

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can't hear you.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We will be sending
19 out an email alerting you to the next meeting as soon
20 as we know when that is, and we know where it is.

21 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Yes.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (inaudible phrase)
23 Lots of people aren't getting --

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You have get

1 (inaudible) email. Get on this list.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Me, too.Okay.

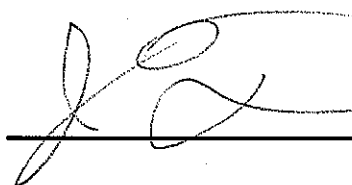
3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Come see me after
4 the meeting. I will give you my card. You can send
5 me an email, and I will add you to the email list.
6 Thank you.

7 SHAWN HOLLAND, MODERATOR: Alright. I want
8 to thank everybody. I appreciate you coming out
9 tonight, providing us with your comments, and thank
10 you, and I declare the Public Hearing closed. Thank
11 you. (applause)

12 End of Design Public Hearing 2-4-13 +++
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Janice L. Tirone, do hereby certify that the foregoing
record is a true and accurate transcription of the
proceedings in the above-captioned matter to the best of
skill and ability.



Janice L. Tirone

**ALL NAMES NOT PROVIDED WERE SPELLED PHONETICALLY TO THE
BEST OF MY ABILITY



Design Public Hearing

February 4, 2013

**At John F. Kennedy Elementary School
Somerville, MA**

At 6:30 PM

FOR THE PROPOSED

**Beacon Street Project
Project File No 607209
Project Management Section**

IN THE CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION**

**FRANCIS A. DEPAOLA, P.E.
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR**

**THOMAS F. BRODERICK, P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER**

**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING

A Design Public Hearing will be held by the Massachusetts Highway Department to discuss the proposed Beacon Street improvements project in Somerville, Massachusetts.

WHERE: Somerville City Hall
Aldermanic Chambers
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA

WHEN: Thursday, November 18, 1999 at 7:00 P.M.

PURPOSE: The design hearing is held to provide the public an opportunity to become acquainted with the design of the project. All views and comments made at this hearing will be reviewed and considered into the final design to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The work under this project consists of improvements to Beacon Street between Dickinson Street/Cambridge city line in the east to approximately Oxford Street in the west. Proposed work items include: full depth roadway reconstruction, new cement concrete sidewalks, traffic and pedestrian signal improvements at Washington and Pine Streets, geometric improvements, improved bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, pavement markings, and other associated work.

A secure right of way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The City of Somerville is responsible for acquiring all necessary rights in private or public lands. MassHighway's policy concerning land acquisitions will be discussed at this hearing.

Written views received by MassHighway subsequent to the date of this notice and up to five (5) days prior to the date of the hearing shall be displayed for public inspection and copying at the time and date listed above.

Written statements and other exhibits in place of, or in addition to, oral statements made at the public hearing regarding the proposed undertaking are to be submitted to Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer, Massachusetts Highway Department, Ten Park Plaza, Boston, Massachusetts, 02116. Such submissions will also be accepted at the hearing. The final date for receipt of these statements and exhibits will be ten (10) days after the public hearing.

Plans will be on display for one half hour before the hearing, with a Designer in attendance to answer questions regarding this project.

**MATTHEW J. AMORELLO
COMMISSIONER**

**THOMAS F. BRODERICK, P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER**

Boston, Massachusetts



Deval L. Patrick, Governor
Timothy P. Murray, Lt. Governor
Richard A. Davey, Secretary & CEO
Frank DePaola, Administrator



Dear Concerned Citizen:

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is committed to building and maintaining a transportation infrastructure that is both safe and efficient for all who use our roadways, bridges, bicycle facilities and pedestrian paths, while maintaining the integrity of the environment.

As part of the design process for this project, we are conducting this public hearing to explain the proposed improvements, listen to your comments and answer any questions you may have. At the conclusion of the hearing, MassDOT will review all of your comments and, where feasible, incorporate them into the design of the project.

We recognize that road and bridge construction can create inconveniences for the public. MassDOT places a great deal of emphasis on minimizing the temporary disruptive effects of construction.

MassDOT encourages input from local communities and values your opinions. Please be assured that we will undertake no project without addressing the concerns of the community.

Sincerely,

Frank DePaola
Administrator, Highway Division

WHAT IS A PUBLIC HEARING?

WHY A PUBLIC HEARING?

To provide an assured method whereby the Commonwealth of Massachusetts can furnish to the public information concerning the State's highway construction proposals, and to afford every interested resident of the area an opportunity to be heard on any proposed project. At the same time, the hearings afford the Commonwealth an additional opportunity to receive information from local sources which would be of value to the State in making its final decisions to what design should be advanced for development.

WHY NOT A VOTE ON HIGHWAY PLANS?

The hearings are not intended to be a popular referendum for the purpose of determining the nature of a proposed improvement by a majority of those present. They do not relieve the duly constituted officials of a State highway department of the necessity for making decisions in State highway matters for which they are charged with full responsibility.

WHAT DOES A PUBLIC HEARING ACCOMPLISH?

It is designed to ensure the opportunity for, or the availability of, a forum to provide factual information which is pertinent to the determination of the final alternative considered by the state to best serve the public interest, and on which improvement projects are proposed to be undertaken.

It is important that the people of the area express their views in regard to the proposal being presented, so that views can be properly recorded in the minutes of the meeting. These minutes will be carefully studied and taken into consideration in the determination of the final design.

RIGHT OF WAY ISSUES

A secure right of way is necessary for this project. Temporary construction easements may be required. Your municipality is responsible for acquiring all necessary rights in private or public lands. If your property is affected, your rights are fully protected under law.

1. REASON FOR PROJECT

The completion of this project will serve local needs. The proposed enhancement will also be in the interest of others in the greater community, and provide for the public good.

2. WHO CONTACTS ME?

Representatives of the municipality have already contacted or will contact you. They will explain the procedures used in acquiring any necessary rights in land.

3. WHAT ABOUT DONATIONS? WHAT IS A RIGHT OF ENTRY?

Town officials will often seek donations, of parcels, where permanent rights are required. This procedure will minimize the acquisition cost for your community.

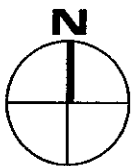
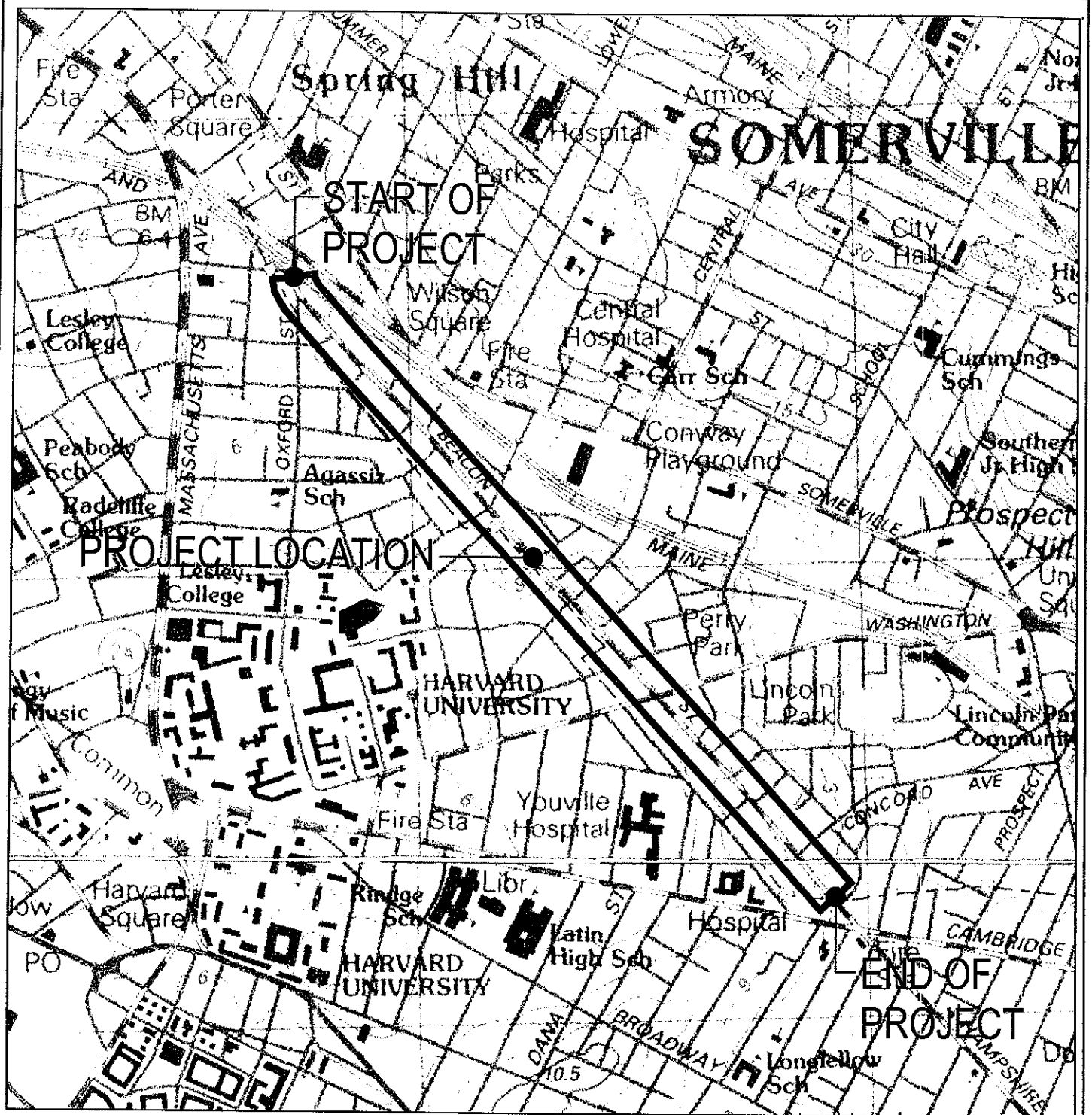
A Right of Entry is a document that is signed by the owner. It allows the Contractor to perform certain types of work on the owner's land. The work is usually minor in nature and frequently consists of loaming/seeding behind sidewalks, new driveway apron work, grading/sloping, and wetland protection, etc. The rights granted are temporary in nature.

4. WHAT IS A FAIR PRICE FOR THE ACQUIRED PARCELS?

In the event that donations are not considered, or completed, every effort will be made to ensure that an equitable value is awarded. Municipal and/or outside appraisers will complete an appraisal. Consideration is given to the type of rights needed, whether in fee, permanent or temporary easements. The appraisal will be the basis for arriving at a fair price (for damages that result).

5. MUST I ACCEPT THE MUNICIPALITY OFFER?

No, if the owner feels that the offer is not fair the owner may petition the courts. This action does not stop or delay the acquisition. The action must occur within 3 years. The owner(s) may be paid pro tanto (for the time being). The pro tanto payment will not prejudice the court's final decision.



SCALE: 1" = 1000'

Design Consultants, Inc.

CIVIL ENGINEERS and LAND SURVEYORS

120 Middlesex Avenue, Suite 20

Somerville, MA 02145

617-776-3350p 617-776-7710f

**BEACON STREET ROADWAY AND
STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS,
SOMERVILLE, MA**

LOCUS MAP

2012-027

INSERT DETAIL OF PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS HERE

Project Location

Beacon Street is an urban arterial that runs southeast from Somerville Avenue to the Cambridge city line. The Beacon Street Roadway and Streetscape Improvements Project in Somerville will reconstruct 1.1 miles of roadway, from Oxford Street to the Somerville/Cambridge city line.

Project Purpose and Proposed Improvements

Existing Conditions

The existing roadway width is approximately 44 feet within a 66 foot City layout. Existing sidewalks are approximately 10 feet wide. The posted speed limit is 30 mph along the corridor. Abutting land use is a mix of residential and commercial with parking provided along both sides throughout most of the project area.

The roadway pavement is in poor condition. From Oxford Street in the northwest to the city line in the southeast the pavement is a series of patches, potholes, failing trench repairs, lateral and longitudinal cracks, shoving, heaving and rutting.

The sidewalks are substantial in width, however are in poor condition and have non-compliant cross slopes in many cases. While there are sections of new sidewalk, much of the sidewalk is very old with cracks, settlement and heaved sections. Additionally throughout the project there are frequent, poorly constructed and failing bituminous concrete pavement patches.

The pedestrian ramps throughout the corridor are in poor condition and not ADA compliant. In numerous locations pedestrian ramps do not exist at all.

Utility poles exist on both sides of the street with clearances generally less than 18 inches from face of curb, most utility poles are located at or slightly behind the back of curb.

Beacon Street has been in operation as currently constituted for over one-hundred and fifty years. As such the profile and alignment is fixed by the development that occurred during that time. Fortunately, the arterial is in an area of gentle topography, hence vertical and horizontal alignment is acceptable. The vertical alignment ranges from $\frac{3}{4}\%$ to 2%. The horizontal alignment for all intent and purpose is straight with several minor angle points.

With regard to traffic, Beacon Street operates as one travel lane in each direction with areas of metered and 2 hour parking permitted along both sides. A variable substandard 4 foot-wide bicycle lane is provided along both sides of the Beacon Street. Traffic signalization is provided at several locations along the corridor to control vehicular traffic and/or to provide for pedestrian crossings. The intersections of Beacon Street/Washington Street and Beacon Street/Park Street/Scott Street are fully signalized. The intersections of Buckingham Street/Cooney Street and Museum Street/Kent Street provide pedestrian actuated traffic signals. There is a lack of turn lanes or protected movements at Washington Street and signal equipment is antiquated, resulting in significant back-ups and delays. Traffic and pedestrian signal equipment do not conform to current MUTCD and ADA standards.

The existing typical section for Beacon Street provides for one travel lane, a bicycle lane and parking (about 22 feet) in each direction. Field observations and intersection count data indicate that pedestrian and bicycle activity is high.

Proposed Improvements

The existing sidewalks will be removed and replaced with new concrete sidewalks. The existing roadway will be replaced via a combination of new full depth pavement and milling and overlay. All traffic signals (vehicular and pedestrian) will be replaced with new MUTCD compliant signals. All curbing will be replaced with new granite curbing. New street furniture, including benches, trash cans and bicycle racks will be installed. New street trees will replace the existing trees in poor condition. New crosswalks will be installed with new ADA compliant wheelchair ramps at all street crossings.

The proposed typical sections within the available 66 foot-wide road right of way have been developed to provide an improved level of safety and mobility for bicycles while maintaining acceptable levels of service for all other travel modes, including on-street parking. These typical sections are shown and described as follows:

Oxford Street to Museum Street and Park Street/Scott Streets to Washington Street:

A 6 foot-wide cycle track with 1v:4h mountable curbing is proposed on the northeast side of the roadway and a 9 foot wide cycle track is proposed on the southwest side of the roadway, each adjacent to a 10 foot-wide concrete sidewalk. On-street parking (7 feet in width) will be maintained on the southwest side only. This results in an 11 foot-wide northbound travel lane and a 13 foot-wide southbound travel lane.

Museum Street to Park/Scott Streets:

A 5 foot-wide bike lane is proposed adjacent to an 11 foot-wide travel lane in both directions. The existing 10 foot sidewalk and on-street parking (7 feet in width) will be maintained on the northeast side. A new 5 foot-wide sidewalk will be added on the southwest side while maintaining the existing adjacent wall structure at the back of sidewalk.

Washington Street to the Cambridge City Line:

A 5 foot-wide bike lane is proposed adjacent to an 11 foot-wide travel lane in both directions. The existing 10 foot-wide sidewalk and on-street parking (7 feet in width) will be maintained on both sides of the street.

Right of Way Needed

Currently, the sidewalks along Beacon Street extend to the face of building along the stretch of roadway. Since the existing, non-compliant sidewalks will be replaced with new compliant sidewalks, minor temporary construction easements will be required along a significant portion of Beacon Street. It is anticipated that ninety-nine (99) temporary construction easements will be required to complete the proposed improvements. No permanent easements or taking will be required for this project.

Construction Traffic Management

All roadways in the project area will remain open to residents during construction. Occasional short term traffic disruptions may occur, but every effort will be made to minimize inconvenience. Pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular access to abutting properties will be maintained throughout construction.

Project Schedule

The project is currently at the 25% Design. The project is scheduled to be advertised in late August, 2013. It is anticipated that the contract will be awarded over the winter of 2013, with construction commencing in the Spring of 2014 and competing in the Fall of 2015.

Cost

The preliminary cost estimate for the project includes \$5.9M in hard costs, with a total construction cost of \$7.4M.

Other

Utility improvements focusing on water distribution and sanitary sewer improvements will be undertaken by the City in a separate project. These utility improvements will be completed prior to the start of the streetscape improvement project.

1. The first part of the report is a general introduction to the subject of the study. It discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research.

2. The second part of the report is a detailed description of the methodology used in the study. It includes information about the sample size, the data collection methods, and the statistical analysis techniques.

3. The third part of the report is a discussion of the results of the study. It presents the findings of the research and discusses their implications for the field of study.

4. The fourth part of the report is a conclusion and a summary of the main findings. It also includes recommendations for further research.

5. The fifth part of the report is a list of references. It includes all the sources of information used in the study.

6. The sixth part of the report is an appendix. It contains additional information that is not included in the main body of the report.

Please Fold and Tape

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Postage Here

Thomas F. Broderick, P.E.
Chief Engineer
MassDOT – Highway Division
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116-3973

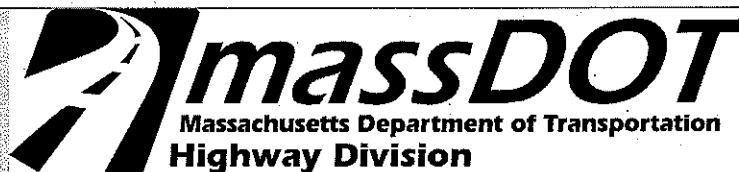
RE: Public Hearing
Beacon Street Project
Somerville, MA
Project File No. 607209
Project Management Section



PUBLIC HEARING SIGN-IN SHEET

Project:	Somerville - Beacon Street 607209	Hearing Date:	February 4, 2013
Facilitator:	MASSDOT - HIGHWAY DIVISION	Place/Room:	Kennedy School

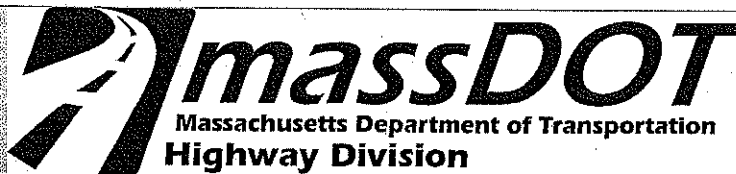
	Name (Please Print)	Affiliation	Phone
1	Shawn Holland	Highway Division - Project Management	
2	LOU RABITO	MASSDOT-COMPLET STREETS CONSTRUCTION	
3	Nicholas Shectman	resident	617 543 9265
4	CRAIG Sheehan	Rights WA/MASSDOT	781 424 9146
5	Nathaniel Fink	Cycle track supporter	617-784-3976
6	MARY Ghidoni	10 mossland st som ergotix@hotmail.com	617-764 2049
7	Lauren Clayton	16 KENWOOD ST	617.686-8829
8	Samantha Coen	29 Forest St / resident cyclist	215-285-9787
9	Matt Carthy	Resident cyclist	49 241 6404
10	Anne Marie Gallagher	cyclist	617-482-8860
11	Michael Loretto	cyclist/resident	610-613-9585 (cell)
12	Elias Mae	cyclist/professional	617-230-9268
13	Chris Porter	Cyclist	617-233-7191
14	Elaine Pano	BUSINESS OWNER	617 868-0772
15	Leslie Pang	Property Owner	617-868-0772
16	James M. Drago	RESIDENT BEACON ST	617-491-7872
17	Josyphine Drago	Resident 326 Beacon St	617-491-7872
18	Robert Wilf	Cyclist - Living in North Cambridge	617-256-4674



PUBLIC HEARING SIGN-IN SHEET

Project:	Somerville - Beacon Street 607209	Hearing Date:	February 4, 2013
Facilitator:	MASSDOT - HIGHWAY DIVISION	Place/Room:	Kennedy School

	Name (Please Print)	Affiliation	Phone
19	Cathy Piantigini	RESIDENT OF BEACON ST CYCLIST, PEDESTRIAN, MOTORIST	cpiantigini@gmail.com
20	Dave Huse	DA	781-641-8423
21	FRANK Saszynski	DISTRICT 4 MASSDOT	781-691-8474
22	Mark Kaepplein	Concerned citizen	617-417-0315
23	Richard Gill	cyclist	617-441-0945
24	Charlie Denison	resident	617-852-6125
25	Todd Blake	MBTA (T) ^{Service Planning /} _{bus ops}	617-222-1623
26	Doug Williams	Resident	617-417-3370
27	Saul Jacobowitz	Resident	617-460-2508
28	Sergio Reyes	Resident Beacon St	617-290-5614
29	Ron Newman	Somerville Beacon Comm. Htee	617-628-8898
30	Nidany Bradhan	Resident Beacon St	949-584-3301
31	Jessie Calkins	cyclist, pedestrian Somerville Resident	617-835-7697 guemadmodem@yahoo.com
32	Benjamin Tucker	Resident	802-380-5006
33	Kathryn Hurd	resident	309-830-5237
34			
35			
36			



PUBLIC HEARING SIGN-IN SHEET

Project: Somerville – Beacon Street 607209

Hearing Date: February 4, 2013

Facilitator: MASSDOT – HIGHWAY DIVISION

**Place/
Room:** Kennedy School

*you're
integrated
ask for
e-mail
address*

	Name (Please Print)	Affiliation	Phone
1	Shawn Holland	Highway Division – Project Management	
2	Pamela Blittersdorf	Bicycle Union	610 213 5008
3	Arden Weinblatt		314-629-7176
4	Karla Vronsky	Resident Cyclist	617-821-1758
5	Michael Trepornier	MassDOT	857-368-8828
6	Sonia Dalley	(who needs parking) resident/owner/pedestrian	617-441-0327
7	HELEN Tisserand	Resident	617-710-9755
8	Liz Henagan	resident/cyclist	815-7387130
9	JANE BRESTOR	Resident, Somerville Hawell St.	617 628-2411
10	Lynn McWhood	resident	617-623-8751
11	Barbara Stemer	resident	617-776-3033
12	Valerie Enriquez	commuter, cyclist	217-722-1364
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Tuesday, February 12, 2013 3:41 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Attention: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209.

From: susan.lynch@comcast.net [mailto:susan.lynch@comcast.net]
Sent: Monday, February 11, 2013 10:50 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: Attention: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209.

To Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer, MassDOT

I just learned of your plans to eliminate 111 parking spaces on Beacon St in Somerville for a bike lane. This is an idiotic idea! The businesses in that area will suffer tremendously. As a regular patron of the Dali Restaurant I can tell you it will be devastating to their business. It is already a challenge to park in that area and as a women it makes me uneasy to have to park far from the resturant. This will only make matters worse. Please reconsider!

Sincerely,
Susan Lynch

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Tuesday, February 12, 2013 3:43 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Proposed Somerville cycle track: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209.

From: joe-nash-2013@nash-it.com [mailto:joe-nash-2013@nash-it.com]
Sent: Monday, February 11, 2013 8:12 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Cc: joe-nash-2013@nash-it.com
Subject: Proposed Somerville cycle track: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209.

Thomas F. Broderick, P.E.,
Chief Engineer
MassDOT
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116.
Attention: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209.

Dear Mr. Broderick:

I recently became aware that The City of Somerville has proposed a cycle track the length of Beacon Street where 111 parking spaces would be removed from Beacon Street. This would have a devastating economic impact on all business in the area as well as a social impact on the many households in the area. The impact analysis of this proposal needs to look beyond just the immediate neighborhoods of the proposed change but also the surrounding neighborhoods which will now feel the impact of 111 additional vehicles contending for parking spaces.

I am asking that before this proposal move along to the next stage that The City of Somerville be required to conduct a thorough independent assessment on the impact at this proposal would have and that the The City of Somerville be required to submit alternate proposals.

Respectfully,

Joseph Nash
39 Boston Ave.
Somerville, MA 02144
617-718-1832
joe-nash-2013@nash-it.com

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Tuesday, February 12, 2013 3:42 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Attention: Project Management Section Project File No. 607209.

From: Oscar Botero [mailto:osfeda70@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 11, 2013 9:13 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: Attention: Project Management Section Project File No. 607209.

Dear Mr. Broderick,

I have been very concerned about the proposed Cycle Track on Beacon Street in Somerville. I have been employed by Dali Restaurant on Washington Street for 13 years. With the economic downturn of 2008, most restaurants have been suffering and we have not been the exception. Not having parking available in the area will be detrimental to Dali.

This is the job that gives me the opportunity to have a roof and feed my family and I cannot even imagine the consequences if this project goes through.

I am asking you to do whatever it takes to consider saying "no" to this proposal - the businesses and all of us who work in the area will forever be grateful.

Sincerely,

Oscar Botero
617-233-0341

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Tuesday, February 12, 2013 3:36 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: NO! on the proposed "bicycle track" on Beacon Street near Washington Street, Somerville

From: Linda [mailto:lwhitt58@aol.com]
Sent: Monday, February 11, 2013 8:30 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway; jdelory@somervillema.gov; oboukili@somervillema.gov; tchampion@somervillema.gov; jrossetti@somervillema.gov; naylward@somervillema.gov; vgee@somervillema.gov
Subject: NO! on the proposed "bicycle track" on Beacon Street near Washington Street, Somerville

I am writing to express my extreme displeasure at hearing about a proposed "bike track" for the full length of Beacon Street in Somerville that would result in the removal of 111 parking spaces/meters along Beacon Street near Washington Street.

I will preface this by saying I don't live in Somerville. I *do*, however visit many, many times and go to your retail businesses throughout town - Davis Square, Porter Square, Union Square. So I obviously *like* to spend my money in Somerville! One long-time business that I've gone to for more than 18 years is Dali Restaurant and Tapas Bar, located at the corner of Beacon and Washington Streets. These people are family....not blood family, but my family nonetheless.

If you remove 111 parking spaces along Beacon Street for a *bike path*, you will irreparably harm ALL of the businesses near Dali - this includes the Wine & Cheese Cask, the Kebab Factory, Biscuit, and Bergamot. These are all small businesses who add to the unique flavor of Somerville - why would you want to ruin the ability of these businesses to continue drawing in revenue? That is not very small business-centric - which I *thought* the City of Somerville was all about!

It makes so little sense to remove these parking spaces *and* the parking meters (which, by the way, were JUST installed to produce revenue for the City of Somerville maybe 2-3 years ago?) just for a "bike track". You would destroy these businesses if their patrons have no place to park. Many of these businesses have been there for years and years and have created an ambiance for that little corner of Somerville. It's not on a T line; and buses run by there, BUT people come in from other towns to go to these establishments - which means they need to DRIVE into that area and be assured of easy access to parking. Removing 111 parking spaces along Beacon Street will ensure that can no longer happen and, in my opinion, will indicate that the government of Somerville doesn't really care about small business.

Please realize that this "bicycle track" is not friendly to the many many patrons of the businesses in that area and the removal of 111 parking meters should NOT happen.

Thank you for your time.

Linda Whittaker
160 Patrick Road
Tewksbury, MA 01876

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Tuesday, February 12, 2013 3:47 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Attn: Thomas F. Broderick; re Project File No. 607209

From: Mary Anne C [mailto:shoppingmarge@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 11, 2013 5:52 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: Attn: Thomas F. Broderick; re Project File No. 607209

February 11, 2013

Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer
MassDOT
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116.

Attention: Project Management Section
Project File No. 607209.

Dear Mr. Broderick,

As a pedestrian, a driver and an employee at Dali Restaurant in Somerville, I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed Cycle Track on Beacon Street in Somerville.

My reasons are as follows:

- 1) If the metered parking spaces are removed from Beacon Street, customers for Dali Restaurant and other businesses on the street will have no place to park, as almost all the streets in Somerville are resident only. There are no public parking lots nearby. These are tough times for small businesses - if it becomes more difficult, some small businesses will go *out* of business. These business owners are the people who pay taxes and invest in the community on a daily basis.
- 2) Beacon Street has been in disrepair for many years and the money for the proposed cycle track ("Preliminary estimates put the project at \$5.9 million with a total construction cost of \$7.4 million and funding will come from the statewide capital improvement program") would be better used for repaving and repair of the street.
- 3) Beacon Street is unsuitable for a cycle track as it is broken up between Museum Street and Park Street by the "historic wall" of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Cambridge. That means the

proposed cycle track would run for .4 mile, after which cyclists would go back into the street for .2 mile and then back on a cycle track for .2 mile. It really doesn't make sense.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments.

Mary Anne Carlson
Office Manager
Dali Restaurant & Tapas Bar

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Tuesday, February 12, 2013 3:48 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209

From: Emily Matthews [mailto:emilyinslumberville@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 11, 2013 5:41 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209

Email to:

Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer, MassDOT, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116. Attention: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209

From:

Emily Matthews
Somerville citizen, registered voter and working person

Dear Mr. Broderick:

I am writing to express my sincere concern about, and fairly solid opposition to, the proposed Cycle Track.

As someone who works in a nighttime-oriented hospitality concern at the corner of Beacon & Washington streets (Dali restaurant) I can speak with real experience and authority on how fewer parking spaces will result in less business for all of the aggregate small businesses in the area. (Nothing better exemplifies this than a street-closing movie crew filming in the area; a space-robbing bike-rental rack being erected; and/or a multi-day snow-related city-wide street parking ban.)

The loss in revenues will result in loss of jobs for area working people, plain & simple.

Unless the city has a plan to compensate for the loss of metered spaces presently used by customers and employees alike (which I don't believe they do) by converting a like number of 'resident-only' spots into metered-parking instead, the effect on commerce in an already-fragile economy can and will only be deleterious. Please reconsider this proposal from the area businesses' point of view, which is not 'anti-cyclist' but 'job-preserving'.

Thank you,

- Emily Matthews

3 Maxwell's Green
Apt 3-108
Somerville, MA 02144



2/11/13

Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer
MassDOT
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116
Attention: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209

Dear Thomas F. Broderick,

I am writing this letter to express my full support for the Beacon Street cycle track. As a developer and resident interested in the Union Square redevelopment area in Somerville, I have discovered a very large and active community of cyclists. Through my research I have found a great number of people who do not own vehicles and use the bicycle as their primary means of transportation. In most Greater Boston neighborhoods close to half of the households have zero-vehicles. I believe the entire community will benefit from this proposal. By making cycling safer and more convenient for current cyclists, the cycle track will likely attract new cyclists, effectively reducing the vehicular traffic.

Given the negative local and global impacts of vehicular traffic, I believe it is in the best interest of the city to curb its overreliance on cars by encouraging alternative modes of transportation such as biking. As a dedicated cyclist in the Cambridge and Somerville areas, I can honestly say that this project will make my trips safer and more convenient. With more people biking in this area and less vehicular commuting, the community will benefit from reduced traffic and pollution, increased fitness among its residents, and stronger support of local businesses.

I would also like to recommend a few improvements to the current cycle track proposal. I believe the cycle track should be extended to Inman Square. I also recommend that the city build raised crosswalks for pedestrians and a raised cycle track for cyclists at cross streets that do not have signals to make the proposal safer.

People's travel choices are changing. In order for our city to thrive and attract a diverse group of people, it must take every measure to provide a wide range of suitable transportation options to all of its residents. I enthusiastically support the Beacon Street cycle track as a measure that will express the city's awareness of the needs of its biking community and its willingness to address the demands of our time.

Sincerely,

Sebastian Mariscal

Sebastian Mariscal Studio

Principal

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Monday, February 11, 2013 12:43 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209

From: John Reinhardt [mailto:riverreinhardt@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, February 08, 2013 3:38 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209

Thank you for your presentation at the Kennedy school in Somerville. It was very useful. The design boards showing the cycle track are very inspiring. I want to thank you for pursuing this option to greatly improve the Beacon Street bicycle corridor.

The one caution I want to make is that intersections and driveways will need careful attention to make them as safe as possible.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment. Good work.

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Monday, February 11, 2013 12:35 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Concerning Beacon Street Somerville Reconstruction Project

From: Greg Hill [mailto:gdubya49@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, February 08, 2013 11:09 AM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: Concerning Beacon Street Somerville Reconstruction Project

To MassDOT:

As a Somerville resident, I'm concerned about the Beacon Street Somerville Reconstruction Project and the potential danger to pedestrian public safety if cycle tracks adjoin sidewalks with no physical barriers between cyclists and pedestrians,

The lack of any such barriers will also fail to discourage sidewalk cycling, which continues unabated even in business districts with already-existing bicycle lanes.

Thank you,

Greg Hill
24 Walnut St.
Somerville MA 02143

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2013 1:47 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Beacon Street Cycletrack Feedback (Project File No. 607209)

>-----Original Message-----

>From: deerneb@gmail.com [mailto:deerneb@gmail.com] On Behalf Of
>Benjamin P. Reed
>Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2013 11:37 AM
>To: DOT Feedback Highway
>Cc: jdelory@somervillema.gov; hmorrisson@somervillema.gov; Holland, Shawn
>(DOT); aldermanconnolly@gmail.com; brucemdesmond@yahoo.com;
>aldermansullivan@aol.com; william.a.white@verizon.net
>Subject: Beacon Street Cycletrack Feedback (Project File No. 607209)

>
>To Mr. Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer, Beacon Street
>Cycletrack, Project File No. 607209

>
>Dear Mr. Broderick,

>
> I write today in support of the Beacon Street Cycletrack. As
>a Somerville resident that has used a bicycle as my sole means of
>transportation - for work, for errands, for friends and fun - for the
>past 4.5 years of city living (3.5 of them in Boston, Cambridge, and
>Somerville), I have a deep appreciation and desire for well designed
>cycling infrastructure within the greater Boston area.

>
> Over the last three years, I have witnessed an enormous
>surge in the number of cyclists on the streets, and I know first-hand
>from friends and acquaintances that are new cyclists themselves that
>the increase in cycling lanes, "sharrows," and vocal support from
>elected officials has helped lead this boom.

>
> But cycling infrastructure is not just about increasing
>the numbers of riders. It is just as importantly about improving the
>safety of those already on the street.

>
> Beacon Street in particular, from Inman Square through to
>Elm Street, is a particularly unpleasant, and occasionally dangerous,
>stretch of road. I would know - I live in Inman and ride the length of
>Beacon to visit my girlfriend in NE Somerville regularly. The
>condition of the road is terrible, the bike lane and sharrow markings
>are practically invisible, and yet there is a very wide roadway that
>could be reconfigured to better suite the changing transportation
>needs of our city.

>
> In addition to voicing my support for the general
>improvement of the road, I would also like to encourage the following:

>
> * Extending the cycletrack all the way to Inman Square
>(or the Cambridge City Line).
> * Exploring leasing parking for a metered parking lot at

>the new Whole Foods site, to help offset the increased traffic from
>the store.
> * Building raised crosswalks for pedestrians and a raised
>cycletrack for cyclists at all cross streets with no signals, for
>added protection.

>
> Thank you in advance for your work to improve this road,
>and for taking my suggestions into consideration.

>
>
>Sincerely,

>
>Ben Reed
>843-422-3858
>45 Houghston St, #2
>Somerville, MA 02139

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2013 1:42 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Beacon St. Cycletrack; Why I'm Proud of Somerville

From: Christine M. Casalini [mailto:ccasalini@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2013 11:00 AM
To: tftald32@aol.com; Holland, Shawn (DOT); aldermanconnolly@gmail.com; brucemdesmond@yahoo.com; aldermansullivan@aol.com; william.a.white@verizon.net; jdelory@somervillema.gov; hmorrison@somervillema.gov; DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: Beacon St. Cycletrack; Why I'm Proud of Somerville

Hello,

I am so happy and proud to live in Somerville, a place where I can walk, ride and take public transportation. I strongly support the Cycletrack project for Beacon St. Adding more cycling infrastructure is a wonderful way to improve our health and community cohesiveness! I would like to see the following improvements to the existing plan:

- Extend the cycletrack all the way to Inman Square (or the Cambridge City Line).
- Explore leasing parking for a metered parking lot at the new Whole Foods site (as a community benefit to offset the increased traffic the store will bring).
- Build raised crosswalks for pedestrians and a raised cycletrack for cyclists at all cross streets with no signals for added protection.

Thank you for all the hard work you do on behalf of the residents of Somerville.

Sincerely,
Christine

--

Christine M. Casalini
Grant Writer, Development Consultant, Strategist
www.twitter.com/castlegrants
(617) 875-7702

Feb. 6, 2013

Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer
MassDOT – Highway Division
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116-3973
Attn: Project Management Section

Re: Beacon Street Project, Somerville

Dear Mr. Broderick:

I am writing to offer comments on this project, primarily from the perspective of a bicyclist who uses the corridor regularly to get from Arlington to Kendall Square or downtown Boston and back. I attended the Feb. 4th public hearing but chose not to speak in order to give others a chance to be heard.

I am in favor of the concept of cycle tracks on this street. This is a very heavily used bicycle route – a key link between Boston, Cambridge, Somerville, and Arlington -- and cycle tracks will help encourage even more people to bicycle instead of driving.

I understand the concerns about potential safety issues with the cycle track. **Careful attention should be paid to ensuring that the cycle track design is safe**, including providing good visibility at intersections, physical separation from pedestrians, and opportunities for cyclists moving at different speeds to pass each other.

I also understand the concerns about loss of parking. **MassDOT should work with the city on parking management strategies** to support turnover for businesses and make sure that residents have access to parking near their house.

Given the significant investment that will be made and the uncertainties with the impacts, I suggest considering a **trial deployment of the cycle track and new parking configuration** (and management) just using paint, movable bollards, etc., before the pavement is reset. A deployment of four to six months might be adequate for users to adjust and for the impacts of the new configuration on parking and traffic operations to be assessed.

I also agree with comments made at the Feb. 4th public hearing that more needs to be done for pedestrians, such as **more frequent crosswalks**. In particular I agree with the **criticism of the textured, granite-faced crosswalks on Somerville Ave.** In addition to being a problem for people with disabilities, the granite edging is likely to become out of alignment with the asphalt pavement over time in spots as the pavement warps and buckles. This creates extra, unnecessary and potentially even hazardous bumps for cyclists. The road will have lots of bumps again soon enough – we don't need to create opportunities for more of them.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Respectfully,

Chris Porter
28 Lakehill Ave.
Arlington, MA 02474
cdptrans@gmail.com

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2013 11:25 AM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Beacon Street Cycletrack

FYI

From: jennifer park [mailto:jennifer.s.park@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2013 1:12 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway; jdelory@somervillema.gov; harrison@somervillema.gov; Holland, Shawn (DOT); aldermanconnolly@gmail.com; bruce@desmond@yahoo.com; aldermansullivan@aol.com; william.a.white@verizon.net; tftald32@aol.com
Subject: Beacon Street Cycletrack

I am a resident of Somerville in Union Square and I was very excited to hear the plans for a cycletrack on Beacon Street. I bike on this street all the time in the summer and have noticed the ghost lane of meters that are never used which is perfect to turn into a protected bike lane. I also notice the large number of bikers that bike along this stretch for commuting as well as pleasure as it's a very direct way to get to Kendall Square and in to Boston. In fact, it would make sense to extend the cycletrack through Inman Square since the destination of bikers going along Beacon Street is usually Kendall Square area. I often bike along this route to go to Community Boating, through Somerville, Cambridge and over the Longfellow bridge to Boston. In addition to extending the cycletrack to Inman, I also would like to voice my support for building a raised crosswalk/cycletrack with no signals at the intersections to provide protection for pedestrians and bikers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jennifer Park

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: deerneb@gmail.com on behalf of Benjamin P. Reed [benjaminpreed@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2013 11:37 AM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Cc: jdelory@somervillema.gov; h Morrison@somervillema.gov; Holland, Shawn (DOT); aldermanconnolly@gmail.com; bruce mdesmond@yahoo.com; aldermansullivan@aol.com; william.a.white@verizon.net
Subject: Beacon Street Cycletrack Feedback (Project File No. 607209)

To Mr. Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer, Beacon Street Cycletrack, Project File No. 607209

Dear Mr. Broderick,

I write today in support of the Beacon Street Cycletrack. As a Somerville resident that has used a bicycle as my sole means of transportation - for work, for errands, for friends and fun - for the past 4.5 years of city living (3.5 of them in Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville), I have a deep appreciation and desire for well designed cycling infrastructure within the greater Boston area.

Over the last three years, I have witnessed an enormous surge in the number of cyclists on the streets, and I know first-hand from friends and acquaintances that are new cyclists themselves that the increase in cycling lanes, "sharrows," and vocal support from elected officials has helped lead this boom.

But cycling infrastructure is not just about increasing the numbers of riders. It is just as importantly about improving the safety of those already on the street.

Beacon Street in particular, from Inman Square through to Elm Street, is a particularly unpleasant, and occasionally dangerous, stretch of road. I would know - I live in Inman and ride the length of Beacon to visit my girlfriend in NE Somerville regularly. The condition of the road is terrible, the bike lane and sharrow markings are practically invisible, and yet there is a very wide roadway that could be reconfigured to better suite the changing transportation needs of our city.

In addition to voicing my support for the general improvement of the road, I would also like to encourage the following:

- * Extending the cycletrack all the way to Inman Square (or the Cambridge City Line).
- * Exploring leasing parking for a metered parking lot at the new Whole Foods site, to help offset the increased traffic from the store.
- * Building raised crosswalks for pedestrians and a raised cycletrack for cyclists at all cross streets with no signals, for added protection.

Thank you in advance for your work to improve this road, and for taking my suggestions into consideration.

Sincerely,

Ben Reed
843-422-3858
45 Houghston St, #2
Somerville, MA 02139

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: jennifer park [jennifer.s.park@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2013 1:12 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway; jdelory@somervillema.gov; hmorrisson@somervillema.gov; Holland, Shawn (DOT); aldermanconnolly@gmail.com; brucemdesmond@yahoo.com; aldermansullivan@aol.com; william.a.white@verizon.net; tftald32@aol.com
Subject: Beacon Street Cycletrack

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Thank you for your consideration.

Jennifer Park

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: Christine M. Casalini [ccasalini@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2013 11:00 AM
To: tftald32@aol.com; Holland, Shawn (DOT); aldermanconnolly@gmail.com; brucemdesmond@yahoo.com; aldermansullivan@aol.com; william.a.white@verizon.net; jdelory@somervillema.gov; hmorrison@somervillema.gov; DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: Beacon St. Cycletrack; Why I'm Proud of Somerville

Hello,

I am so happy and proud to live in Somerville, a place where I can walk, ride and take public transportation. I strongly support the Cycletrack project for Beacon St. Adding more cycling infrastructure is a wonderful way to improve our health and community cohesiveness! I would like to see the following improvements to the existing plan:

- Extend the cycletrack all the way to Inman Square (or the Cambridge City Line).
- Explore leasing parking for a metered parking lot at the new Whole Foods site (as a community benefit to offset the increased traffic the store will bring).
- Build raised crosswalks for pedestrians and a raised cycletrack for cyclists at all cross streets with no signals for added protection.

Thank you for all the hard work you do on behalf of the residents of Somerville.

Sincerely,
Christine

--

Christine M. Casalini
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www.twitter.com/castlegrants
(617) 875-7702

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: Domenic Ruccio [domenic.uccio@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 05, 2012 7:48 AM
To: Dailey, Donny (DOT); Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Cc: Lisa van der Pool; Auditi Guha; laine.globe@gmail.com; Patricia (SEN) Jehlen; Sergio Reyes; Sam Coren; James MacCLurkin; David Olmsted
Subject: Fwd: Beacon Street Reconstruction Project; Neighborhood opposition

Dear Mr. Dailey and Mr. Holland:

Can you please provide a status update on the design of the Beacon Street Reconstruction Project. Specifically, are there plans to modify the current design of the plan to retain parking on Beacon Street at its currently existing levels?

Also, can you please identify the next milestone for this project, the implications of that milestone on the project, and the date for that milestone.

I have requested that the City of Somerville indicate the criteria that must be met to effect a re-design of this plan. To date I have not received meaningful answer. The City has received substantial opposition to this project as currently designed (see below), but to date has not indicated either publicly or in response to direct written request of the Planning Department whether the clear and strenuous opposition to this design will cause the Planning Department to redesign this project in accordance with the well-articulated wishes of the residents and businesses of Beacon Street.

As I mentioned in the last paragraph of my earlier email to you below, the lack of transparency from the City of Somerville is becoming ever more glaring. There is a strong feeling in the Beacon Street neighborhood, based on the City's demonstrable lack of responsiveness to citizen concerns, that this project will be foisted on them despite their stated opposition. We simply are beginning to feel that our comments are falling on deaf ears at the City level.

Again, it is my sincere hope that this lack of transparency and responsiveness will not be repeated at the State level.

Thank you.

Domenic J. Ruccio, Jr.

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Dailey, Donny (DOT)" <Donny.Dailey2@dot.state.ma.us>
Subject: Re: Beacon Street Reconstruction Project; Neighborhood opposition
Date: November 28, 2012 8:54:17 AM EST
To: "domenic.uccio@gmail.com" <domenic.uccio@gmail.com>, DOT Feedback Highway <DOTFeedbackHighway@dot.state.ma.us>
Cc: "patricia.jehlen@masenate.gov" <patricia.jehlen@masenate.gov>

Domenic , I ll be in touch

Donny

From: Domenic Ruccio [mailto:domenic.ruccio@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 28, 2012 08:16 AM
To: Dailey, Donny (DOT); DOT Feedback Highway
Cc: Patricia (SEN) Jehlen <patricia.jehlen@masenate.gov>
Subject: Beacon Street Reconstruction Project; Neighborhood opposition

DOT Feedback: Attention Shawn Holland

Dear Mr. Dailey, Mr. Holland and Ms. Jehlen:

I am writing to inform you of the high level of opposition to the Beacon Street Reconstruction Project that has been articulated by the residents, business owners, and business patrons of Beacon Street. The current plan as put forth by City of Somerville Planning Department has been met with near-universal opposition by the constituency most directly and significantly impacted by this plan, the businesses and residents of Beacon Street. The removal of parking from the even-numbered side of the street is viewed by the neighborhood as possibly destroying the fabric of neighborhood life here on Beacon Street for residents and threatening the viability of Beacon Street businesses. Additionally, the plan is perceived as clearly anti-business in its effect.

In recognition of this and after listening to opposition articulated strenuously by residents and business owners at a Design Review meeting on Nov. 13th, the Board of Alderman voted a formal Resolution requesting that the Planning Department offer alternative designs that better address the needs of Beacon Street residents and businesses.

In short, this Plan as currently designed does not enjoy the support of the residents and businesses of Beacon Street, the very people who will live most intimately with the ramifications of this plan. Nor does it enjoy the support of the Board of Aldermen.

To date the City of Somerville appears to have given lip service at best to opposition to this plan. Many question that have been asked at meetings continue to go unanswered by the City. As such, it remains a mystery to most residents and business owners on Beacon Street why this plan continues to enjoy the support of the City and why it continues to be foisted on their neighborhood in clear contravention of their wishes.

1. Petition

A Petition expressing opposition to the elimination of parking were placed in three Beacon Street businesses. During a two week period, over 780 people signed this petition. Those signatures represent residents, business patrons and business owners. A copy of this petition was mailed to Mayor Curtatone by Certified Mail with a request that the Mayor indicate how this articulated opposition to the Planning Department's plan would be factored into the re-design of the plan. That request was not answered nor was a second request for an answer. A copy of the letter to Mayor Curtatone is attached. A copy of the petition will gladly be furnished to you upon request.

2. Resolution of Board of Aldermen

At its regular meeting on Nov. 20, 2012 the Board of Aldermen voted a Resolution, Agenda Item 193977, as follows:

"That the City of Somerville's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development consider alternative plans to deal with the public safety and traffic concerns of pedestrians, business owners, residents and cyclists regarding the Beacon Street reconstruction project, specific to the proposed "cycletrak" installation detailed at the November 13, 2012 community meeting."

This resolution can be found at the City of Somerville web site at http://somervillecityma.igmm2.com/Citizens/Detail_Meeting.aspx?ID=1578

3. Design Review Meeting Nov. 13, 2012

Prior to the design review meeting of Nov. 13th, The City of Somerville has done a conspicuously poor job of notifying the residents and business owners of design review meetings. Notice was given through a posting on the City's web site and through emails sent out to a mailing list. The City also maintains that it made automated calls giving notice of design review meetings. However, until notice was given by a group of private citizens at their own expense, you would have had to search long and hard to find a neighborhood resident or business owner who knew anything about this project. Whatever notice the City allegedly gave was clearly not effective.

Prior to the meeting on Nov. 13th, a group of private citizens, at their own expense, mailed notice of the meeting to the Beacon Street neighborhood. Consequently, the Nov. 13th meeting was the first meeting at which there was a meaningful representation of residents and businesses from Beacon Street. That representation expressed strong opposition to the removal of parking from their neighborhood. A video tape of that meeting is available for viewing at www.BeaconStreetSomerville.org.

It is particularly disingenuous that the Planning Director has represented that this plan was greeted with enthusiasm at prior meetings. The truth of the matter is that those meetings were heavily attended by cycling advocates who were much better informed of this plan and the design review meetings for the plan than the citizens of Beacon Street. Beacon Street residents, by and large, didn't know those meetings were even taking place. Any alleged enthusiasm came from cyclists who may spend 10 minutes a day riding through Somerville, not the people who live and work in Somerville seven days a week, year in and year out. They have only recently learned of this plan and are unequivocally unenthusiastic about it.

Neighborhood opposition to this plan centers on several factors:

1. Flawed Parking Study: The plan is premised on a flawed parking study that indicates, incorrectly, that there is excess parking capacity on Beacon Street,
2. Cycle Safety Concerns: Somerville Police Department accident statistics do not support the a safety rationale for the current plan configuration,
3. Unanswered questions: regarding snow removal, trash removal parking restrictions, etc.

This issues will be addressed in more detail by other concerned residents who will follow up with you in their emails.

For a representative sampling of public opinion regarding this project I would refer you to the Somerville Patch which has done several stories on this matter. Additionally, a story in the electronic version of the Boston Globe will shed light on the general sentiment of the neighborhood regarding this project. Please see http://www.boston.com/yourtown/news/somerville/2012/11/businesses_object_to_proposed.html

In conclusion, it is incumbent on MassDOT to appreciate the high level of opposition to this current plan for the reconstruction of Beacon Street. This plan does not enjoy the support of the majority of residents of, and none of the business owners on, Beacon Street. There is a general feeling in the Beacon Street neighborhood that the City is determined to push this plan through over their objections, regardless of the volume of that opposition and despite the fact that they are the people most significantly impacted by this project.

It remains a mystery to most of the neighborhood why their best interests are being discounted by the government that supposedly represents them. We all sincerely hope that MassDOT will hear our objections to this plan and call for a redesign of this plan more consistent with the best interests of all involved. Thus far, the design process of this plan as conducted by the City of Somerville, has not been a paragon of representative governance in action; quite the opposite. I write to you in the hope that this regrettable lack of responsiveness to the concerns of its citizens will not be repeated at the state level.

Thank you.

Domenic J. Ruccio, Jr.

DATE Feb. 5, 2013

Dear Mr. Brodenck,

Thank you very much for the due diligence you are showing in respect to the proposed changes to Beacon Street.

I was unable to attend the hearing yesterday, so I want to get my voice across now.

I will tell you that I am an avid cyclist (okay, maybe not avid, but enthusiastic), and due to many incidents that have occurred to my friends and strangers while on bike, I support increased measures for bike safety, which in the proposal for Beacon Street revolve around the cycletrucks.

I too, of course, understand the concerns of local businesses, who do not want to see fewer customers because of less parking.

I suppose it is your job to design the plans as best as you can, taking into account all the feedback that you receive. I trust that there is a solution that can appease both bikers like myself, business owners, and other interested parties.

Thank you again,
Lauren Glaser

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 10:22 AM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Attention.: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209

FYI

From: Margaret Swanson [mailto:margaret.swanson@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 9:26 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: Attention.: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209

Re: Beacon Street

I've been a resident at 34 Beacon Street for the past three years. I don't own a car and bicycle to work almost every day. In my experience, I have never found cycling along Beacon Street to be problematic; however, I have more than once felt that PARKING near my home has been an issue.

While I don't own a car, I do regularly rent or use Zipcar for various trips, which are often precipitated by the need to pick up something larger than I would want to haul on a bike. Correspondingly, I would like to be able to *unload* from these trips as close to my apartment as possible, which can already be a challenge and one that I fear would be considerably worse if on-street parking were removed from half of Beacon Street. The argument that a parking space available within a quarter-mile distance from a resident's home is sufficient doesn't sound that great to me if there's not even a place to unload my vehicle without illegally sitting in the new bike lane. Also, my family all live out-of-state, and when they come to visit, they often have a car to park overnight. It is already difficult to accommodate them with a Visitor's Permit, especially since given the distance they travel, they tend to stay for more than the three nights allotted by the permit.

I love my bicycle, and I love my apartment on Beacon Street, but the plan to scrap half of the on-street parking worries me. I think it would be great to see the sidewalks and bike lane made more consistent and continuous along the length of Beacon Street. But eliminating so much parking without any plans to replace it with, say, structured parking somewhere else (perhaps a garage next to the long-closed Blockbuster at Beacon & Kirkland?)... I am concerned. I do hope you keep Beacon Street residents in mind as you continue to develop solutions that can meet the needs of everyone involved.

Thank you,

Margaret Swanson

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 10:47 AM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209

FYI

From: Gloria J. Korsman [mailto:gkorsman@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 2:13 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209

Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer
MassDOT
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116
Attention.: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209

Dear Mr Broderick,

This written comment is in regard to the plan to build a cycle track on Beacon Street in Somerville. I am unable to attend the state public hearing on the 25 percent design on Monday February 4th, 6:30 PM at JFK Elementary School and regret missing the opportunity to comment in person.

I am a year-round bicycle commuter. My daily 1.5 mile commute from North Cambridge to Harvard Divinity School follows the same path as the proposed cycletrack.

When I learned about the proposed cycletrack on Beacon Street, I squealed with delight. I am neither a racer nor a thrill-seeker. I am simply interested in safe, environmentally sustainable travel from home to work and back again.

It is a shame that riding a bicycle on Beacon Street requires so much courage! Car doors fly open carelessly into the bike lane, distracted drivers drift into the bike lane, aggressive drivers travel at unsafe speeds, potholes and debris threaten bicycle tires. These things do not happen everyday, but often enough that peers and co-workers think I'm crazy to commute by bike.

Painted bike lanes not enough since most people remain too nervous about being next to moving cars operated by distracted and aggressive drivers.

Not only would I enjoy a safer, less stressful commute with cycle tracks on Beacon Street, but a separate lane for bikes would invite more commuters to give up cars for short distances and reduce congestion for everyone. The opening of bike paths and protected lanes in Montreal led to an immediate 40% jump in the number of cyclists using those roads. Vancouver's cycletracks prompted a doubling of bike activity. In New York City, weekday bike traffic nearly tripled when the protected bike path was installed around Brooklyn's Prospect Park. And, in each case, the accident rate declined. Why would Beacon Street be different?

Please do not allow a handful of vocal business owners to derail the cycletrack for fear of progressive change. Bikes are cheaper to maintain than cars, so I have more money to spend at local shops than drivers of similar means. Business owners should welcome cyclists!

Sincerely,
Gloria J Korsman

91 Montgomery Street #2L
Cambridge MA 02140
gkorsman@yahoo.com

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 10:39 AM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Regarding the Proposed Cycletrack on Beacon St.

FYI

From: run.after.the.sun@gmail.com [mailto:run.after.the.sun@gmail.com] **On Behalf Of** Kelsey Pierson
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 2:32 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: Regarding the Proposed Cycletrack on Beacon St.

To Whom it May Concern,

As a Somerville cyclist who frequently rides on Beacon Street, I am very much in favor of the proposed cycletrack. The current state of this road is not only inefficient, but dangerous for all of its users: pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. The lack of safe paths for each user makes it incredibly difficult for all users to share the street, creating tension and encouraging poor judgement that may put others at risk.

I feel that a cycletrack will not only provide its users with safer divisions of transport, but will also bring the Beacon Street community together. Redesigning how people travel down Beacon will promote its appeal as a comfortable and exciting environment, drawing even more users to Beacon's well-loved small businesses.

I believe that the proposed cycletrack will provide safety to all users and allow its small businesses to thrive by reestablishing how Beacon is viewed and utilized.

Thank you so much for your time,

Kelsey R. Pierson
30 Otis St, Somerville, MA

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 10:23 AM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Beacon St Reconstruction Plan

>-----Original Message-----

>From: Jonathan Huggins [mailto:jonathan.h.huggins@gmail.com]

>Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 9:11 AM

>To: DOT Feedback Highway

>Subject: Beacon St Reconstruction Plan

>

>To Whom It May Concern,

>

>I am writing in support of including a cycletrack in the Beacon St, Somerville
>reconstruction plan. As someone who bikes Monday-Friday along Beacon St
>and also often drives there, I know that including a cycletrack will make Beacon
>St safer for both bikers and drivers. Beacon St is used by riders not only in
>Somerville, but also Cambridge, Arlington, and other nearby towns. Making
>biking safer and easier will help to continue to encourage more commuters to
>bike, creating a healthier, less polluted state.

>

>Thank you for your consideration.

>

>Sincerely,

>

>Jonathan Huggins

>19A Forest St

>Cambridge, MA 02140

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 10:24 AM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: MassDOT Beacon Street 25% design

Fyi

>-----Original Message-----

>From: jonathan@6x9design.com [mailto:jonathan@6x9design.com]

>Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 9:56 AM

>To: DOT Feedback Highway

>Subject: MassDOT Beacon Street 25% design

>

>Dear Mr. Broderick,

>

>I'm unable to attend tonight's meeting regard the MassDOT and the Beacon

>Street cycletrack. However, I find it important to relay that the

>cycletrack would be great improvement to all aspects of the community.

>

>I commute from North Cambridge to Fort Point. There is a significant flow

>of cyclist traffic that uses Beacon Street, occasionally stopping in to

>some of the local businesses en route. I believe a cycletrack would

>increase a feeling of safety on the busy road. I'm comfortable with

>traffic. But many are not. Older folks and children would also benefit

>from its use. The less vehicular traffic on this and other streets is a

>benefit to all. No one needs the roads blocked solid from one intersection

>to the next during rush hour. I have been doored in such a situation when

>a passenger grew impatient with the standstill and got out without

>looking.

>

>Let's work to increasing safety and mobility for all.

>

>Thank you,

>Jonathan Sainsbury

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 10:23 AM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Beacon st. cycletracts

From: Lerna Ekmekcioglu [mailto:lerna@MIT.EDU]
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 9:04 AM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: Beacon st. cycletracts

Dear Thomas F. Broderick,

I am writing in support of the Beacon Street cycletracks. I use the street to commute to my work at MIT. I am hoping that it will get safer for us all cyclists.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lerna

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 10:22 AM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Beacon Street redesign

Fyi

From: Matthew S. Meisel [mailto:mmeisel@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 9:25 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Cc: hmorrison@somervillema.gov; mheuston@hotmail.com
Subject: Beacon Street redesign

Attn: Project Management Section
Project File No. 607209

Dear Mr. Broderick:

I understand that a potential redesign of Beacon Street in Somerville is being reviewed. I am a resident of Somerville and a frequent patron of the businesses on that stretch of Beacon Street.

I am writing to strongly encourage you to adopt cycletracks in the redesign of this section of Beacon Street. As I'm sure your aware, this section of Beacon Street is heavily traveled by cyclists riding between North Cambridge and West Somerville, on the one hand, and Central Square, Kendall Square, and downtown Boston, on the other.

If the number of parking spaces will be reduced on Beacon Street, I would strongly support adding meters or some other parking restriction (e.g., two-hour parking, with no exception for residents) in front of businesses on Beacon Street. This will ensure that patrons will continue to have convenient parking.

Best wishes,

Matthew Meisel

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 10:21 AM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Project File No. 607209 - Beacon St Cycletrack

Fyi

From: Christine Snively [mailto:christine.snively@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 7:51 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Cc: Hayes Morrison; mheuston@hotmail.com
Subject: Project File No. 607209 - Beacon St Cycletrack

Dear Mr. Broderick,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Beacon Street cycle track. I am a cyclist, pedestrian, and Beacon St. resident, and I believe that an improved biking infrastructure would be great for the city. Unfortunately I couldn't make the meeting tonight, but wanted to express my enthusiasm for the project in an e-mail.

The safety provided by a cycletrack in Somerville will encourage more people to take up biking, resulting in fewer cars taking up valuable parking spots on the street. I moved to Somerville three years ago and at the time I owned a car. The more comfortable I became biking around the city (which took time), the less I drove. I began commuting to work by bike and by using public transportation, and realized that my car was sitting still for days at a time. I got rid of my car and am no longer taking up a spot on Beacon St. I believe an improved bike infrastructure along this major artery would encourage more people like me to give biking a try, resulting in fewer parked cars.

Thank you for continued work on this important project.

Best,

Christine Snively
95 Beacon St.

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 10:20 AM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Beacon street public meeting comments

FYI

From: Becca Weaver [mailto:becca.weaver@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 6:04 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: Beacon street public meeting comments

To whom it may concern,

Though I am unable to attend the meeting at The JFK elementary school today about the Beacon street redesign, I want to let you know my thoughts on the matter.

I applaud the city of Somerville for being a leader in innovative and sustainable thinking. Somerville is a town with much character already and great access to public transportation and is therefore a highly regarded place to live amongst single people and families. As a Somerville resident and soon-to-be home owner, I am very concerned with what sort of future I and my children will live in. I want to live in a place where I don't have to drive my kids everywhere, dependent on ever increasing expensive gasoline which will continue to pollute their environment. I want to live in a place where I want to walk down the streets for errands and to socialize, and where my kids will be safe on their bikes to adventure. Over the past 4 years of living in the area I have seen more bike lanes, bike racks, and other infrastructure to support the growing interest in alternative transportation. Putting a cycle track in on Beacon Street will make the area much safer and prettier, attracting more people to the area and making it a more desirable place to live and raise a family.

Thank you for your time,
Becca Weaver
24 Cherry st
Somerville, MA 02144

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Becca Weaver
MS Agriculture, Food, and the Environment
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project
Ganei Beantown- Beantown Jewish Gardens
303-819-1223

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 10:16 AM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Cycle Tracks

Fyi

From: Arthur Luz [mailto:luzarthur@msn.com]
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 3:16 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: Cycle Tracks

Please develop Cycle Tracks in Boston. It's a safe way to ensure bikes get their fair share of the road. And makes it safer for everyone. I know that if Cycle Tracks were available I'd use if frequently.

Sincerely,
Arthur Luz

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 10:14 AM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: cycle tracks

FYI

From: Connie Wood [mailto:cnw850@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 3:11 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: cycle tracks

I understand there is a meeting tonight at the Argenziano School Cafetorium regarding Cycle Tracks. I highly support this initiative and urge you to move forward with all possible speed. My household enjoys biking for recreation and exercise but due to physical limitations do not feel safe on public roads. In addition, some members of my family commute solely via bike, a truly environmentally sound method of transportation. However it is not ideal to mix vehicular and bicycle traffic on city streets.

I urge you to develop Cycle Tracks not only to enhance but to save lives.

Sincerely,
Constance N. Wood

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 2:47 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: cycle track on beacon street

fyi

>-----Original Message-----

>From: Christine Spang [mailto:christine@spang.cc]

>Sent: Sunday, February 03, 2013 6:04 PM

>To: DOT Feedback Highway

>Subject: cycle track on beacon street

>

>hello,

>

>This is just a quick message expressing my support for the proposal to
>build a cycle track on beacon street. I'm a Cambridge resident who works
>in Kendall Square, and when visiting Somerville after work Beacon street
>is the most direct route. The ride is always a nightmare! Potholes
>everywhere and lots of traffic. A cycle track would encourage interested
>cyclists who are less willing to put up with the current situation to
>ride on Beacon street.

>

>regards,

>Christine Spang

>256 Brookline Street

>Cambridge, MA

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 11:40 AM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Support for Beacon Street Cycle Track

FYI

From: Maureen Barillaro [mailto:lucyneptune@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 12:31 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Cc: hmorrison@somervillema.gov; mheuston@hotmail.com
Subject: Support for Beacon Street Cycle Track

Dear Mr. Broderick,

I'm writing in support of the Beacon Street cycle track in Somerville/Cambridge. I am planning on attending the meeting on Monday February 4 at the Kennedy School as well, but want to make sure my opinions are included, if I'm not given the opportunity to speak at the meeting.

The cycle track would make cycling safer for me when I ride into Cambridge and Boston from my Porter Sq. residence. I also drive on Beacon Street and will be happy to share the road with cyclists.

Beacon Street is an excellent location for this modern transportation plan. I have commuted many times down this road and there are always hundreds of cyclists using this thoroughway regularly. On any given day there can be a line of bike traffic at a stop light with as many bikes as cars stopped.

Please use this opportunity to make a transportation decision that is better for our health, safety and the climate.

Sincerely,

Maureen Barillaro
Somerville cyclist

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 11:05 AM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Project Management Section Project File No. 607209

FYI

From: Daniel Sheehan [mailto:ddsheehan@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 9:59 AM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Cc: hmorrison@somervillema.gov; mheuston@hotmail.com
Subject: Project Management Section Project File No. 607209

Thomas Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer

Attention: Project Management Section Project File No. 607209

This letter is in support of better bicycle facilities on Beacon Street west of Inman Square in Cambridge. Specifically, I fully support bicycle tracks in this section.

I am a frequent commuter on this road both as a cyclist (April - September, most days) and a driver at all times of the year. Bicycling is a dangerous mode of transportation in the greater Boston area, in part because of the lack of respect for cyclists by some drivers and because of the crowded streets in general. Having room to enhance the cyclists experience and safety on this stretch of roadway without inconveniencing drivers seems like the easiest way of recognizing that bicycles are legal vehicle as recognized by Massachusetts law. Parking will be impacted but, as a driver who occasionally stops in in this area, it is already hit or miss and the existing traffic is the main hindrance for stopping. Getting more people on their bikes more times in the week will relieve the traffic to some degree.

This street is clearly an intercity roadway. Please accept my opinion not as an Arlington resident, but as a resident and tax payer in Massachusetts.

Please let me know if I can contribute in any other way.

My apologies to the two correspondents cc'ed here for the earlier email that included an incomplete DOT address.

Thanks,
Daniel Sheehan
Arlington, MA

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

Federal Aid Project
Somerville, MA

Beacon Street Project
Project File No 607209

This sheet is provided for your comments. Your input is solicited and appreciated. Please return your sheet, with comments, to a staff member at the meeting, or mail to:

Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer
MassDOT – Highway Division
10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116-3973
Attn: Project Management Section

The final date for receipt of written statements and exhibits for inclusion into the official hearing transcript will be ten (10) days after the Public Hearing.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

My husband & I chose to move back to the city from the suburbs for the very reasons that this Beacon St. redesign promotes — ability to patronize local businesses without using our car, increase in walking/cycling for exercise integrated into lifestyle, more sense of community than "car-centric" suburbia provided. I was thrilled to learn about the cycle track plan. It underscores what a good decision it was to buy our home in Somerville & to shop, dine & live here!

Name: Elizabeth Stahl Title: (public school teacher)

Organization: resident

Address: 221 Beacon St. #1 02143

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

Federal Aid Project
Somerville, MA

Beacon Street Project
Project File No 607209

This sheet is provided for your comments. Your input is solicited and appreciated. Please return your sheet, with comments, to a staff member at the meeting, or mail to:

Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer
MassDOT - Highway Division
10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116-3973
Attn: Project Management Section

The final date for receipt of written statements and exhibits for inclusion into the official hearing transcript will be ten (10) days after the Public Hearing.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

I am a ~~strong~~ supporter of the project as currently design. As a ~~home owner~~ resident on the street, frequent bicyclist and pedestrian and customer of many businesses along the corridor. I believe the project will be good for everyone in the neighborhood. My one concern is that the safety of the cycle track needs to be reviewed to ensure that it is a safe path for bikes and won't put cyclists and drivers at risk of accident. Visibility at driveways and intersections is one way to address this concern.

Name: David Zarowin Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: 221 Beacon St. #1 Somerville 02143

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

Federal Aid Project
Somerville, MA

Beacon Street Project
Project File No 607209

This sheet is provided for your comments. Your input is solicited and appreciated. Please return your sheet, with comments, to a staff member at the meeting, or mail to:

Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer
MassDOT - Highway Division
10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116-3973
Attn: Project Management Section

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PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

I am very much in favor of the current Beacon St. plans, with the exception of the dearth of crosswalks. We need to maintain the crosswalk at Museum St. & I would prefer that the Sacramento St. crosswalk remain where it is. More are needed, particularly at Oxford. I think a cycle track would be a great improvement and much safer. It is not a matter of riding on the sidewalk & I fear that many people don't understand cycle tracks. I'd also like to advocate for the resurfacing of the end of Museum St. It's in as bad shape as Beacon St. but seems to be viewed as an orphan. If it's not done now it's hard to

Name: Debby Galef Title: imaginer, if ever
Organization: Somerville
Address: 93 Hammond St., Cambridge will get around it.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

Federal Aid Project
Somerville, MA

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PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

I am totally for the beautification of Beacon Street reconstruction. But OPPOSED to losing parking. We are a 4th Generation Deli that requires several parking spots for customers and loading zone for deliveries.

This will devastate our income due to the loss of parking. We have a Petition with over 700 signatures I will forward to you.

Name: Elaine & MARK PAND Title: owner 244-250 Beacon St

Organization: P & K Deli

Address: 244 Beacon St
Somerville MA

* This project will affect our future income immensely.
* Our customers don't have time to look for parking.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

I fully support the current plan, including having a cycle track.
As someone who bikes, drives, walks, and parks a car on Beacon,
I believe a cycle track is the best way to increase for all
modes of transportation. Please continue efforts to work with
businesses^{residents} to accommodate parking needs. I would like to see
the cycle track at a different level from sidewalks to emphasize
separation, especially for visually impaired. Thank you for your
work on this project. It's going to be great for the community.

Name: Liz Flanagan Title: _____

Organization: President of Boston Cyclists Union

Address: 337A Beacon St.

Somerville, MA 02143

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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Somerville, MA

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PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

I enthusiastically support the overall project, including the cycletrack and the new sidewalk at the Academy. I think there will be safety, livability, and business benefits. I ~~do~~ do urge that more crosswalks be added, and that the cycletrack remain raised at minor side street intersection. Do NOT use brick crosswalks, and use the money saved by doing thermoplastic crosswalks for raised cycletrack crossings. Thank you.

Name: Alex Epstein Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: 278 Beacon Street
Somerville MA 02143

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

Federal Aid Project
Somerville, MA

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PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

- Huge supporter overall of current plan!
- Cycle tracks should go all the way to Inman Square. The parking reduction required is a solvable problem w/ regulations and/or pricing.
- Additional crosswalks needed @ Oxford St, Museum St, and other locations between Oxford St and Washington St.
- Prefer unsignalized crossings ~~mid-block~~ that are mid-block or at small side streets. Motorists are pretty good about yielding, and less wait for peds + cars.
- Ped signals should not have buttons. Automatic, preferably concurrent w/ LPI, no more than 90 second wait for peds.
- Use money for brick crosswalks for raised sidewalk + cycle track crossings of side streets. Use ^{zebra} thermo crosswalks ~~is~~ instead of brick.

Name: Charlie Denison Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: 25 Linden Ave, Apt 23

Somerville, MA 02143

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

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Somerville, MA

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PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

First of all, I very much appreciate all your hard work. In particular, I appreciate the aspects of the Beacon Street Project that attend to the safety of bikers. As a bike commuter, I have avoided Beacon Street in the past out of fear of collisions. When I do drive, I have found the street nerve-wracking due to the high volume of bikers and lack of clarity about how they should get out of the way of cars. As a pedestrian, these changes seem to me a way to make Beacon attractive, rather than the eye sore ^{it is now.}

Name: Anna Cable Title: Social Worker

Organization: _____

Address: 24 Cherry Street
Somerville MA 02144

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

Federal Aid Project
Somerville, MA

Beacon Street Project
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PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

I'm in favor of the proposed improvements. There may be some flaws, but I believe the benefits will outweigh any minor detriments (as voiced by various people at the hearing) the project may introduce. Let's go forward with it & not delay any more. Go!

Name: Sam Jacobowitz Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: 17 Buckingham St., Somerville

Upon hearing of the forthcoming Beacon St. project I feel inclined to voice my comments from afar. For the past 5 years I have spent many mornings perched at intersections on Beacon Street while observing traffic. Tears have beaded up in my eyes as I've seen twenty plus commuting cyclists wait for the light in Inman Square. The number of commuting cyclists will continue to increase every year as car ownership and driving become more inaccessible. Having resided in over 20 great bicycle cities within that time, the highest percentage of bicycle ridership I have witnessed has occurred on Beacon Street. Through witnessing these morning commutes, there have been too many close calls which have occurred mainly through inattentive drivers, car doors being opened and cyclists having to suddenly move into the driving lane due to car doors being opened and to avoid other slow moving cyclists or vehicles parked in their trajectory.

Through viewing the plans for the Beacon reconstruction, I believe that consistency of an extra-wide cycle track needs to occur throughout the scope of this project. The importance of this component is in the best interest of drivers, everyday bicycle commuters and the majority of the general population who are unlikely to travel by bicycle because of the lack of safety they perceive in doing so. I recognize the importance of parking but see it as a completely non-essential component of public right of way. The ancient school of thought that warrants on-street "free" parking wastes precious public space while further encourages automobile transit, noise, pollution and unsafe roadways.

In the best interest of the community, the high percentage of everyday drivers who are too scared to bicycle because of inadequate bicycle accommodations, and those who are out pedaling their way everyday, please seriously consider the elimination of parking that would take away from a cycle track which would be adequate enough to accommodate varying speeds of cyclists traveling in each direction.

Create better roadways by seeing a greater and sweeter vision,

Ian Klepetar
founder and national advocate
Bicycle Benefits

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

Federal Aid Project
Somerville, MA

Beacon Street Project
Project File No 607209

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MassDOT - Highway Division
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Attn: Project Management Section

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PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

I am a Somerville resident, and I currently rent. If Somerville was more bike-friendly I would be far more likely to buy a home in the area. Cyclists are at risk from cars, and I can speak to that. A cycle track would make Beacon street a far more appealing place to spend time and money. Parking is indeed tight, but we need to consider alternative transport options. If more Somerville residents cycle we may need fewer spots for residents. As more people ride bikes to save money, we need to make cycling safer.

Name: Aaron Weinblatt Title: _____

Organization:

Address: 24 Cherry St.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

Federal Aid Project
Somerville, MA

Beacon Street Project
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MassDOT - Highway Division
10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116-3973
Attn: Project Management Section

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PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

MASS DOT,

With regard to your 25% design,
with ADA sidewalks and bike lanes,

GREAT WORK. Somerville (and Cambridge)
can and should lead in bike commuting and use.
When recruiting engineers, biking, walking, mass transit
are key attractions for them. We have five of us
at Runkeeper who live in Somerville then bike commute
to Runkeeper near North Station. Beacon Street is KEY for us.

Name: DOUG WILLIAMS Title: VP ENGINEERING
Organization: RUN KEEPER DOUG @ RUNKEEPER.COM
Address: 66 VICTORIA STREET, SOMERVILLE, MA

Thank you and great job. Please let us know how we can help.
Doug Williams

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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Federal Aid Project
Somerville, MA

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Attn: Project Management Section

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PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

Thank you for the opportunity of this hearing. I have recently bought a condo in East Arlington, and Beacon St. will be my primary corridor, when I ride my bike, for many errands in Cambridge + for frequent trips downtown for errands or for pleasurable rides along the Charles River. I own a car and am very nervous on Beacon with current conditions and so many cyclists. As an avid cyclist who uses Beacon a lot, I am in favor of the proposed improvements.

Name: Sara McCabe Title: _____
Organization: member, Boston Cyclists' Union
Address: 87 New St. Unit 406
Cambridge, MA 02138

Thank you!

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 1:55 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Attention.: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209 / writing in support of the Beacon St cycle track project

FYI

From: ethangiltsdorf@gmail.com [mailto:ethangiltsdorf@gmail.com] **On Behalf Of** ethan giltsdorf
Sent: Saturday, February 02, 2013 2:23 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: Attention.: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209 / writing in support of the Beacon St cycle track project

Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer
MassDOT
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116
Attention.: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209

Dear Mr. Broderick:

I'd like to add my voice of support to Somerville's Beacon St cycle track project. I'm a driver, a pedestrian, and a cyclist, and I think the addition of a cycle track to Beacon St will be an important improvement, not only to making the street safer for all users, but to encourage more cyclists to commute to work. I ride my bike to downtown Boston when I can, and my preferred route taking me from Davis Sq/Ball Sq to downtown is this Beacon St corridor.

Already Beacon is a busy corridor for cycling. The cycle track will make it all the more attractive, speeding up commuting times for car drivers as well.

Thanks for listening, and I hope that your office will do all it can to make sure the cycle track project moves forward.

all best,
Ethan Gilsdorf
83 Josephine Ave apt 2
Somerville MA 02144

--

Ethan Gilsdorf | ethan@ethangiltsdorf.com | <http://www.ethangiltsdorf.com> | <http://www.fantasyfreaksbook.com> |
Author of "Fantasy Freaks and Gaming Geeks: An Epic Quest for Reality Among Role Players, Online Gamers, and Other Dwellers of Imaginary Realms" | Available in paperback, kindle, nook, other ebook formats, and a very cool hardcover |

Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/fantasyfreaksbook> |
Twitter: <http://twitter.com/ethanfreak> |
YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/user/egiltsdorf> |

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 2:45 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Project Management Section, Project File No. 60720

Fyi

>-----Original Message-----

>From: Fiegen, Ann [mailto:fiegen@fas.harvard.edu]
>Sent: Sunday, February 03, 2013 2:21 PM
>To: DOT Feedback Highway
>Subject: Project Management Section, Project File No. 60720

>

>Hello,

>

>I am a Somerville resident living near Ball Square. I am a Harvard student
>working at MIT, and I commute by bike along the Community Path to Davis
>Square and take the Red Line to work 6 days a week. I would greatly appreciate
>the ability to safely bike to Porter then along Beacon street down to Kendall
>Square, for my regular work commute. While I will not brave wet or icy
>weather, the main deterrent from a Beacon Street bike commute is the safety:
>the potholes, abundant parked cars, and vehicle traffic make me very afraid of
>accidents, even if I where a helmet.

>

>I have no car and all my recreation and necessary shopping is done when I
>travel by foot or bike. If I were to bike along Beacon St more frequently, I would
>certainly enjoy the chance to explore the and support business there. Right
>now, the lack of a safe bike route along Beacon is a direct obstacle to become a
>local shopper, and I mainly patronize Davis Square, Ball Square and Porter
>Square businesses.

>

>I recognize the need for convenient parking for residents and businesses along
>Beacon Street, and I hope that all community members can work together to
>find viable and safe solutions that address everyone's needs. This a unique
>opportunity for dialogue and positive change - let's seize it!

>

>thanks,

>

>Ann Fiegen

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 2:15 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Public Hearing - request for Project 607209

FYI

>-----Original Message-----

>From: Terry Accola [mailto:crescentmoon60@gmail.com]

>Sent: Saturday, February 02, 2013 8:41 PM

>To: DOT Feedback Highway

>Subject: Public Hearing - request for Project 607209

>

>Please do not move the cross walk connecting the corner of Sacramanto at
>O'Sullivan's Pub to the center of the Star Market parking lot on Beacon Street.
>Most of the people in my neighborhood, myself included, walk often down
>Sacramento to Star Market, Petsi Pies and the Sacramento underpass to
>Somerville Ave. We depend on this crosswalk to safely cross the street here.
>Moving the cross walk down a block to the far corner of the parking lot is both
>inconvenient and not central for access to the continuation on Sacramento to
>the underpass or the establishments on and near this corner. The corner of
>Beacon and Sacramento will become quite dangerous without a cross-walk and
>its not logical to assume people will walk a block down Beacon St. then back
>again on the other side to get to destinations that are directly across from this
>corner.

>

>Thanks for considering this,

>Teresa Accola

>60 Crescent St., #2

>Cambridge 02138

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 2:27 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Attn: Project Management Section Project File No. 607209

FYI...

From: Brian Thurber [mailto:bthurber@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, February 03, 2013 12:38 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Cc: hmorrison@somervillema.gov; mheuston@hotmail.com
Subject: Attn: Project Management Section Project File No. 607209

I am writing to express my support for the proposed cycletrack on Beacon Street in Somerville. I have been cycling on Beacon Street for almost eight years, and the infrastructure needs to be changed to make it safer for cyclists. As it is now, cyclists need to stay too close to parked cars to stay clear of the cars whizzing by them. Meanwhile, having a parked car door open suddenly is one of the most dangerous things that can happen to a cyclist.

I have ridden several times in the Netherlands and seen what top notch bike infrastructure is like. Adding a cycletrack makes complete sense. For many of my friends - who are all young professionals and many of whom do not own cars - having a segregated area for bikes would make them feel safe cycling, when they otherwise do not.

Thank you,

Brian Thurber
Cambridge, MA

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 10:58 AM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Beacon Street cycletracks

FYI...

From: Sean Hooley [mailto:seanhooley@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, February 01, 2013 1:42 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: Beacon Street cycletracks

I am a Somerville resident on Buckingham, just off Beacon Street and I urge the State to include cycletracks along Beacon Street. My wife and I own a car, but like many others in the neighborhood bike, walk, and use the MBTA most of the time to get to work and enjoy the restaurants and other businesses in Somerville, Cambridge and Boston. Bike lanes are nice, but as someone who has been doored, and had friends doored, I know we need more separated bike lanes like the one designed for Beacon Street so everyone of all ages can get around the Boston area safely by bike. The State of MA has made lofty goals of increasing non car transportation including bicycling and walking, and projects like cycletracks along Beacon are the best way to start achieving those goals. We have seen tons of our money spent making driving easier and cheaper in the commonwealth, this is a great opportunity to make bicycling safe for all: young, old, men and women, of our state.

thank you

Sean Hooley

Somerville MA 02143

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 1:56 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Support for cycletrack on Beacon Street

FYI

From: Doug DiMartile [mailto:doug.dimartile@gmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, February 02, 2013 3:48 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Cc: hmorrison@somerville.gov; mheuston@hotmail.com
Subject: Support for cycletrack on Beacon Street

Hi!

Please make a cycletrack happen on Beacon st! It would make life much safer for riders, drivers and pedestrians alike!

Thank you!

Doug DiMartile, LMHC
Licensed Mental Health Counselor
doug.dimartile@gmail.com
c. 508-280-4797
Sent from my iPhone

This year I am participating in the AIDS Life Cycle from June 2nd – June 8th, 2013. I am biking 545 miles from San Francisco to LA to raise money and awareness for AIDS/HIV services. As I train for the ride in the coming months, I need your help going the distance! Please help with a donation. **You** can make a crucial difference in treating, preventing and hopefully ending this awful disease!

Click to donate:

www.tofighthiv.org/goto/doug

Follow my blog for more info:

www.monkeyandrocket.com

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 2:27 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Attn: Project Management Section Project File No. 607209

FYI...

From: Brian Thurber [mailto:bthurber@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, February 03, 2013 12:38 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Cc: hmorrison@somervillema.gov; mheuston@hotmail.com
Subject: Attn: Project Management Section Project File No. 607209

I am writing to express my support for the proposed cycletrack on Beacon Street in Somerville. I have been cycling on Beacon Street for almost eight years, and the infrastructure needs to be changed to make it safer for cyclists. As it is now, cyclists need to stay too close to parked cars to stay clear of the cars whizzing by them. Meanwhile, having a parked car door open suddenly is one of the most dangerous things that can happen to a cyclist.

I have ridden several times in the Netherlands and seen what top notch bike infrastructure is like. Adding a cycletrack makes complete sense. For many of my friends - who are all young professionals and many of whom do not own cars - having a segregated area for bikes would make them feel safe cycling, when they otherwise do not.

Thank you,

Brian Thurber
Cambridge, MA

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 11:28 AM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: In favor of a cycle track on Beacon St in Somerville

FYI..

From: Alexandra Reisman [mailto:arreisman@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, February 01, 2013 8:44 AM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: In favor of a cycle track on Beacon St in Somerville

Dear Mr. Broderick,

I'm writing to show my strong support for the cycle track proposed on Beacon St in Somerville. I frequent several of the businesses along this corridor and nearly always bike or walk (though I do have a car). I have also commuted along this route (by bike) and it is very busy with cyclists during the morning and evening rushes.

The cycle track would not only accommodate the many cyclists who already use this corridor, but it could also encourage new riders. The more people who have the experience of riding a bike in the city, the better it is for helping the users of different modes relate to each other.

I'm sensitive to businesses' concerns about losing parking, so I think the cycle track and parking measures need to be implemented with utmost attention to the specific parking realities and needs of the businesses along this route. There is no doubt in my mind, however, that a cycle track will ultimately benefit the businesses along this route. I wrote a paper on this very subject for school (the link between bike infrastructure and business districts) and found that bike infrastructure ultimately helps business districts. If my friends and I are planning to go out to a bar, for example, we often decide which bar less based on distance, but on ease of getting there by bike. Places like Union Square (via Somerville Ave) benefit from this, while places like Arlington or Magoun Square lose.

Finally - a plea to include pedestrians' needs in the plan as well. As is, Beacon Street is rather uninviting and in some places uncomfortable to walk. Creating a better walking atmosphere will benefit all modes.

Thank you for your time,
Alexandra Reisman
Cambridge

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: Lehman, Josh (DOT)
Sent: Friday, February 01, 2013 9:43 AM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Cc: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: RE: Support for Beacon Street CycleTrack

Hi Emily -

Luis Mejias' message has been forwarded to the Beacon Street/Somerville (PROJIS #607209) Project Manager, Shawn Holland.

Please let us know if you require any additional information.

Josh
Josh Lehman
Bicycle-Pedestrian Program Coordinator
Office of Transportation Planning
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza, Room 4150
Boston, MA 02116
NOTE: New # is 857.368.8859
E: josh.lehman@state.ma.us

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Friday, February 01, 2013 9:30 AM
To: Lehman, Josh (DOT)
Subject: FW: Support for Beacon Street CycleTrack

Hi Josh,

Can you help route this to the proper folks?

Thanks!

Emily

From: Luis Mejias [<mailto:lmejias@gmail.com>]
Sent: Thursday, January 31, 2013 4:48 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: Support for Beacon Street CycleTrack

As a former resident of Beacon Street, I strongly encourage MassDOT to approve the CycleTrack project. It will create a safer environment for cyclists, cars and buses, and pedestrians. It will lower traffic as more people are encouraged to bicycle. Please approve this project.

Thank you.

Luis Mejias
Home:
12 Shawmut St Apt 1

Malden, MA 02148
617-314-5440

Work:
55 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02142

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: Sam Coren [samantha.coren@gmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, February 02, 2013 7:16 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway; Broderick, Thomas (DOT)
Cc: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209 [Beacon Street Reconstruction Testimony]

To: Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer

Attention: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209

Dear Mr. Broderick,

My name is Samantha Coren and I am a cyclist and resident of Somerville, MA. I have been following the Beacon Street Reconstruction project closely since October of 2012 since I travel down this road daily by bike, foot, and car. I am writing to express a number of concerns regarding the current design of the proposed cycle track and why I do not support the City of Somerville's submissions. I strongly urge MassDOT to not approve such a poorly engineered design for state and federal funding due to the following safety issues:

Perceived Safety vs. Actual Safety

The bike accident data provided by the city in their submissions provides no narrative concerning the type of bike accidents that have occurred on this street, only numbers which indicate that the current accident rate is below the national average. There is no data to support how exactly the cycle track will improve the actual safety of cyclists when there is no demonstrated understanding or analysis of why, how or, where these accidents have occurred on this particular street.

Instead, the explanations for the value of the proposed cycle track design focus more on making cycling more appealing people who are too timid or inexperienced to bike on the roadway. While I generally support efforts to get more people in my city to bike, I can not support a type of poorly designed infrastructure that can put them at a larger risk of injury or death. I am ashamed of my local government for valuing the perception of safety over the actual safety of cyclists and their desire to support a design that could create more safety hazards than it mitigates.

Increased Likelihood of "Hooking" Motor Vehicle/Bicycle Collisions

The cycle track sections will make it extremely difficult for turning motorists to see cyclists who are traveling on the south side when there are parked cars blocking them from view. Since Beacon is lined by a number of cross streets and driveways, the risk of "hooking" style motor vehicle/bicycle accidents is higher compared to a street with few cross streets and driveways. The cycle track study on Copenhagen, which the city cites in the design exception report, shows a dramatic increase of these style collisions after cycle tracks are implemented. For a cyclist to safely travel behind parked cars on a cycle track, they must bike along at an excruciatingly slow speed in order to be able to stop themselves from being "hooked" from turning vehicles that can not see them. Existing bike lane and sharrow accommodations on Beacon provide much better overall visibility between cyclists and motorists compared to the cycle track design that's currently being proposed.

False Sense of Security for Cyclists

The “incompleteness” of the track forces cyclists to transition through alternating sections of cycle track and narrower bike lanes multiple times as they travel end to end on Beacon Street. New cyclists who are comfortable riding in the cycle track may not be comfortable riding in lanes and opt not to continue cycling the entire stretch. Those who do choose to continue biking may be unfamiliar with safe cycling practices for riding in bike lanes and on the roadway with cars, thus putting themselves at a higher risk of injury. Cyclists traveling east on Beacon will not be fully relieved of the “dooring” risk since motor vehicle passengers exiting onto the cycle track may not be accustomed with the practice of checking “blind spots” before opening car doors.

Lack of Safe Roadway Accommodations for Cyclists

The mountable curb section of 6' cycle track will create major hazards for cyclists of all levels as delivery vehicles will regularly have to mount the track in order to not block traffic. This will force cyclists to descend into the roadway and into the travel lane with motor vehicle traffic. The narrowness of this section of track will also force cyclists who wish to pass one another down into the roadway. Inexperienced cyclists descending into the roadway on a frequent basis will put their lives at risk if they do not signal and look for motor vehicles traveling behind or beside them. For motorists, many motor vehicle drivers will not be anticipating this type of movement from cyclists if they carry the belief that cyclists will only ride in the cycle track along these sections of the street.

Should the track be built, cyclists will continue using the roadway as it is within their legal right to do so - especially if they do not view the sections of cycle track as safe or if the cycle track is blocked with pedestrians, trash cans, snow, or unloading vehicles. The physical narrowing of the roadway in the proposed design will provide a severely reduced level of service to cyclists since shoulder width for the travel lanes will be virtually nonexistent. The extremely narrow shoulder also pose a serious risk to parked motorists and their passengers exiting on the drivers side since the road is a high volume arterial. The city and its designers have not accounted for this. Cyclists using the roadway in a legal fashion could also be subjected to harassment from frustrated motor vehicle drivers who can not safely pass them.

Decreased Pedestrian Safety

Most alarming to me is the lack of attention to the possibility of dramatically lowering pedestrian safety from both the city, its designer, and cycling advocacy groups. The famous Copenhagen cycle track study the city cites even points out that Cycling/Pedestrian collisions dramatically increase after the installation of their cycle tracks. Additionally, the south side of the road with retained parking and 9' wide cycletrack is at the same grade as the sidewalk which could exacerbate these pedestrian/cyclist conflicts.

As both a residential and a commercial street, Beacon has several pedestrians of all ages who will need to cross the cycle track sections on a regular basis:

- residents and visitors entering and exiting motor vehicles
- pedestrians crossing the street
- pedestrians navigating around blocked sidewalks
- joggers/runners passing those who walk
- trash removal workers
- city parking enforcement, etc.

There are no laws that prevent pedestrian usage for "cycle tracks" in Massachusetts - pedestrians would legally be allowed to walk in the cycle tracks. Pedestrians should feel safe in sidewalk areas and not be subjected to having to feel anxious about getting hit by cyclists as they go about their regular activity. Cyclists should not have to worry about avoiding pedestrians on a piece of infrastructure that's designed specifically for their use.

No Public Vetting of Design Alternatives

While not necessarily a safety issue, I feel it is important to point out that Somerville's Board of Aldermen passed a resolution in November requesting the city planners to put forth alternative designs to the cycle track for Beacon Street. This was in reaction to a petition of nearly 800 residents, business owners, and business patrons against the parking elimination aspect of the cycle track design.

These "alternative designs" which appear in the PDF of the design exception report, were not presented publicly during public meetings in October, November, or January. It is misleading when the city and their design firm state that the cycle track design is the one that is preferred by the community when no other designs were formally presented for public consideration.

In closing, I would like to state that I believe that the Beacon Street Reconstruction is certainly a project that is worthy of state and federal funding. It is an extremely vital street in the city of Somerville, not only to the people who live and earn a living here, but also to a large number of commuters in the Commonwealth. However, it would be grossly irresponsible of MassDOT to let it materialize with the cycle track design that is being proposed by the city of Somerville. There are several viable alternative designs for reconstructing Beacon Street to improve safety for all users of the road that are far more worthy of our time and consideration. Please request these from the city of Somerville in order to move forward with this much needed revitalization project.

Sincerely,

Samantha Coren

29 Forest St. #3

Somerville, MA 02143

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: David Olmsted [dolmsted@gmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, February 02, 2013 12:26 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway; Dailey, Donny (DOT); Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209, Beacon St Somerville
Attachments: Beacon-DOT.pdf

To: Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer
Attention: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209

Dear MassDOT;

Please take a moment to review the following safety concerns I have with the current Beacon Street re-design, which is seeking its 25% approval from your engineers. Below are some bullet points and an attached diagram which illustrates these hazards:

- Studies show cycle tracks cause a large increase in intersection collisions:
 - Northbound: 6 cross streets, 28 driveways
 - Southbound: 4 cross streets, 21 driveways
- Turning motorists cannot see bicyclists, especially those coming from behind parked cars
- Bicyclists are at risk from cars pulling into and backing out of driveways
- Pedestrians will walk in the cycle track and stand in it while waiting and exiting the bus -- and they are legally allowed to do so
- Trash cans and snow will be stored on the cycle track
- Delivery vehicles will park in and block the northbound side cycle track
- Bicyclists will continue to use the roadway when the cycle track is blocked or snowy, or because they find it to be slower and more dangerous
- No proper accommodation will be provided for bicyclists using the roadway, which is required by state design guidelines
- Slow cyclists are legally permitted to use the sidewalk

Also shown in the attached diagram is a "suggested" design which merits consideration. In this design, sidewalks are narrowed from 10ft to 7ft, and bike lanes are widened from 5ft to 8ft. Creating **buffered bike lanes** outside of the "door zone" can provide ample room and do not prevent bicyclists from using all of the roadway when necessary to pass, prepare for a left turn, etc.

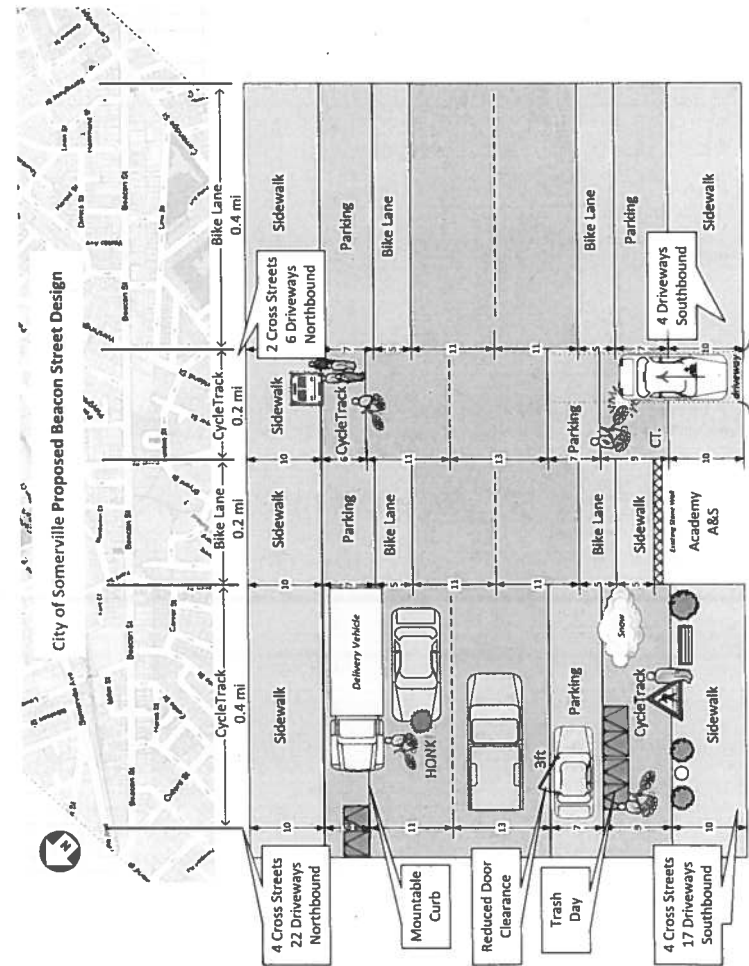
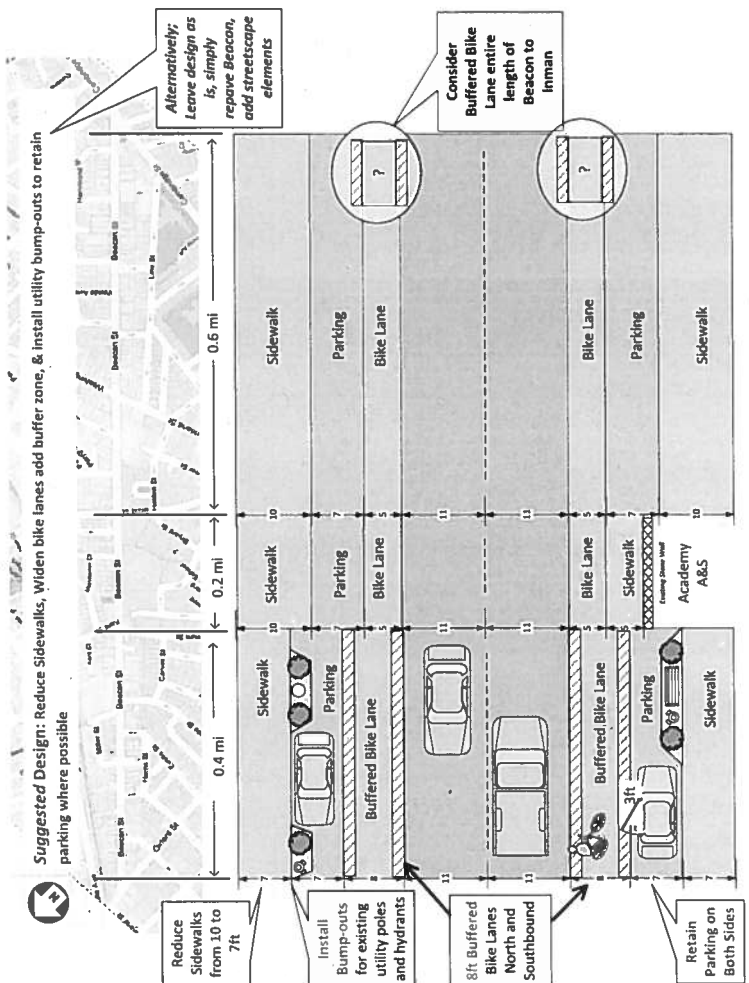
- It will be cheaper to implement than the City proposed idea, because the road crown does not have to change, nor do the intersection elevations need to be blended, and drainage can remain largely the same
- This concept makes sense from a cost point of view, if the original line of the curb is maintained as the low point for drainage
- The sidewalk and street pitches do not have to change, because the sidewalk is merely "cut-out"
- The pavement below the parking spaces (along the original curb line) pitched up in both directions, maintaining the original pitch toward the street and pitching up toward the sidewalk

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

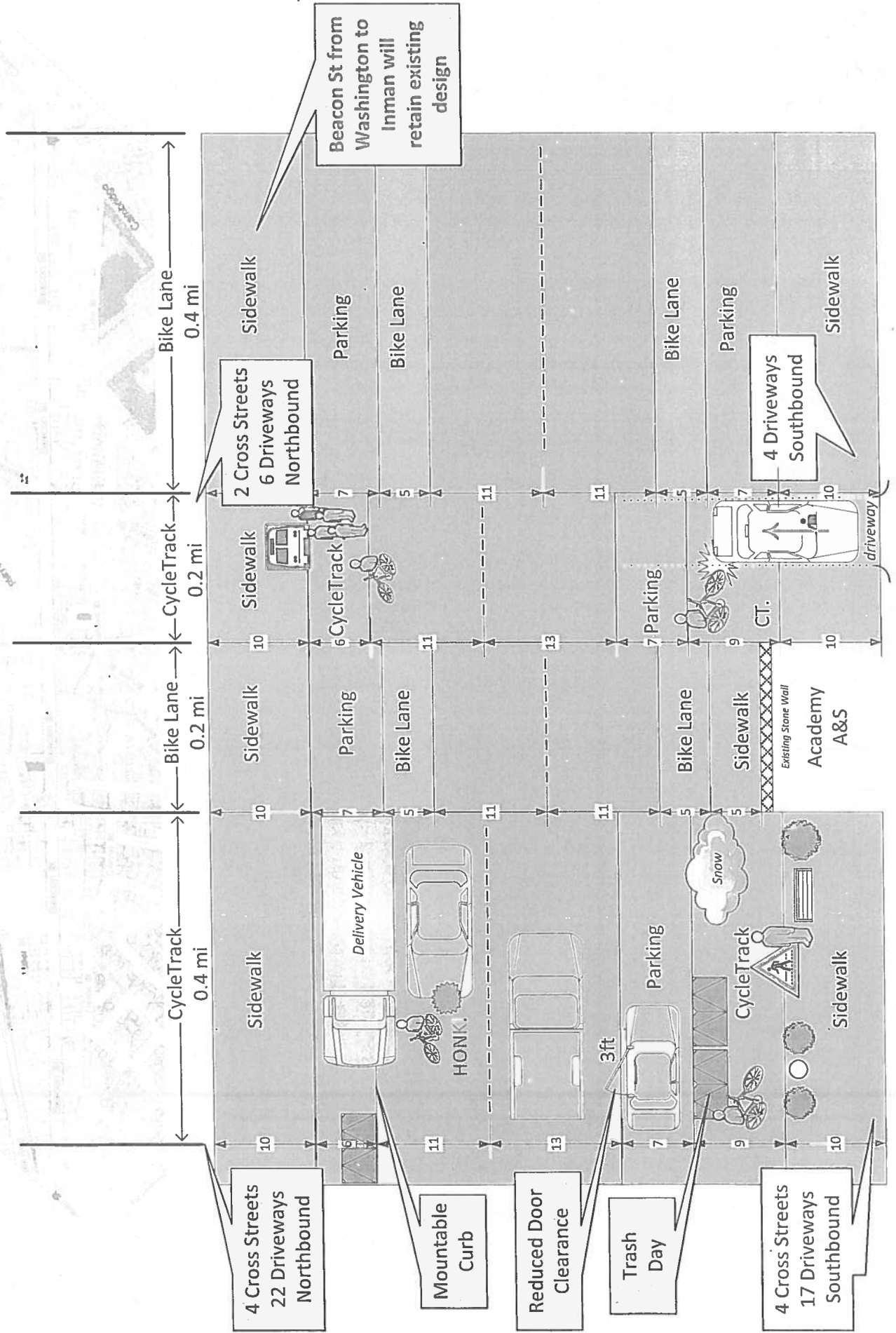
Thank you,

David Olmsted

p: 617-800-2631



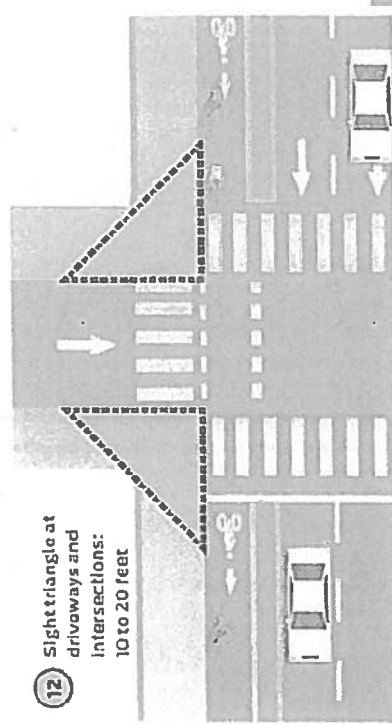
City of Somerville Proposed Beacon Street Design





Residents/Pedestrians/Businesses

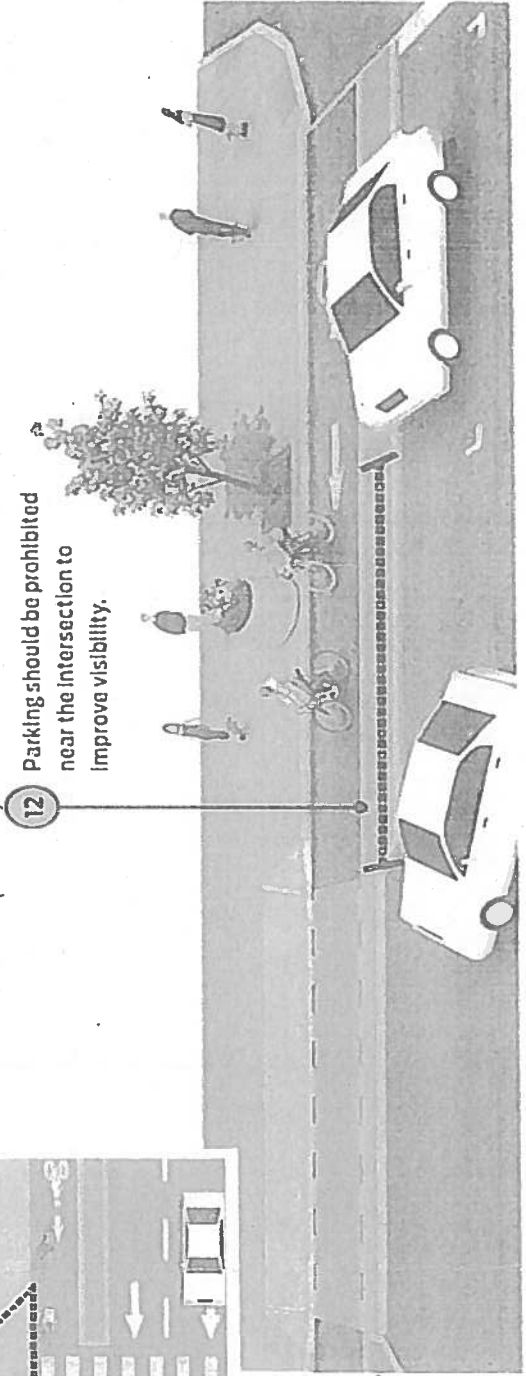
- Tighter clearance for parked car door opening (from 5 feet to 2 feet)
- Loss of at least 111 parking spots: **Takes an adequate parking situation to prohibitive**
- Making cycletrack safer would require removing more parking at every intersection and driveway to improve sightlines' (reference drawings below)
- CycleTrack becomes very large sidewalks (19ft and 16ft)
- Pedestrians are allowed by law to walk on CycleTracks
- No provisions for snow emergency or street cleaning
- No relief parking to east or west of Beacon (MTBA & Cambridge)
- Property values may be impacted
- Cycle track impedes business loading zones
- Cycle track will impact driving customers' ability to patronize establishments
- 780 signed petitions against design
- Delivery vehicles will block traffic



City Design Does Not Comply With These 2 NACTO Safety Recommendations

Bicyclists

- Studies show cycle tracks cause a large increase in intersection collisions
 - Turning motorists cannot see bicyclists, especially those coming from behind parked cars
 - Bicyclists are also at risk from cars pulling into and backing out of driveways
 - To mitigate this problem, design guidelines call for removing more parking at every intersection and driveway
 - People will walk in the cycle track and stand in it while waiting and exiting the bus -- and they are legally allowed to do so
 - Trash cans and snow will be stored on the cycle track
 - Delivery vehicles will park in and block the west side cycle track
 - Bicyclists will continue to use the roadway when the cycle track is blocked or snowy, or because they find it to be slower and more dangerous
 - No proper accommodation will be provided for bicyclists using the roadway, which is required by state design guidelines
 - Bike lanes outside of the "door zone" can provide ample room and do not prevent bicyclists from using all of the roadway when necessary to pass, prepare for a left turn, etc.
 - Slow cyclists are legally permitted to use the sidewalk
- Information provided by Cyclists for Road Rights Awareness and Safety (CRRAS)*



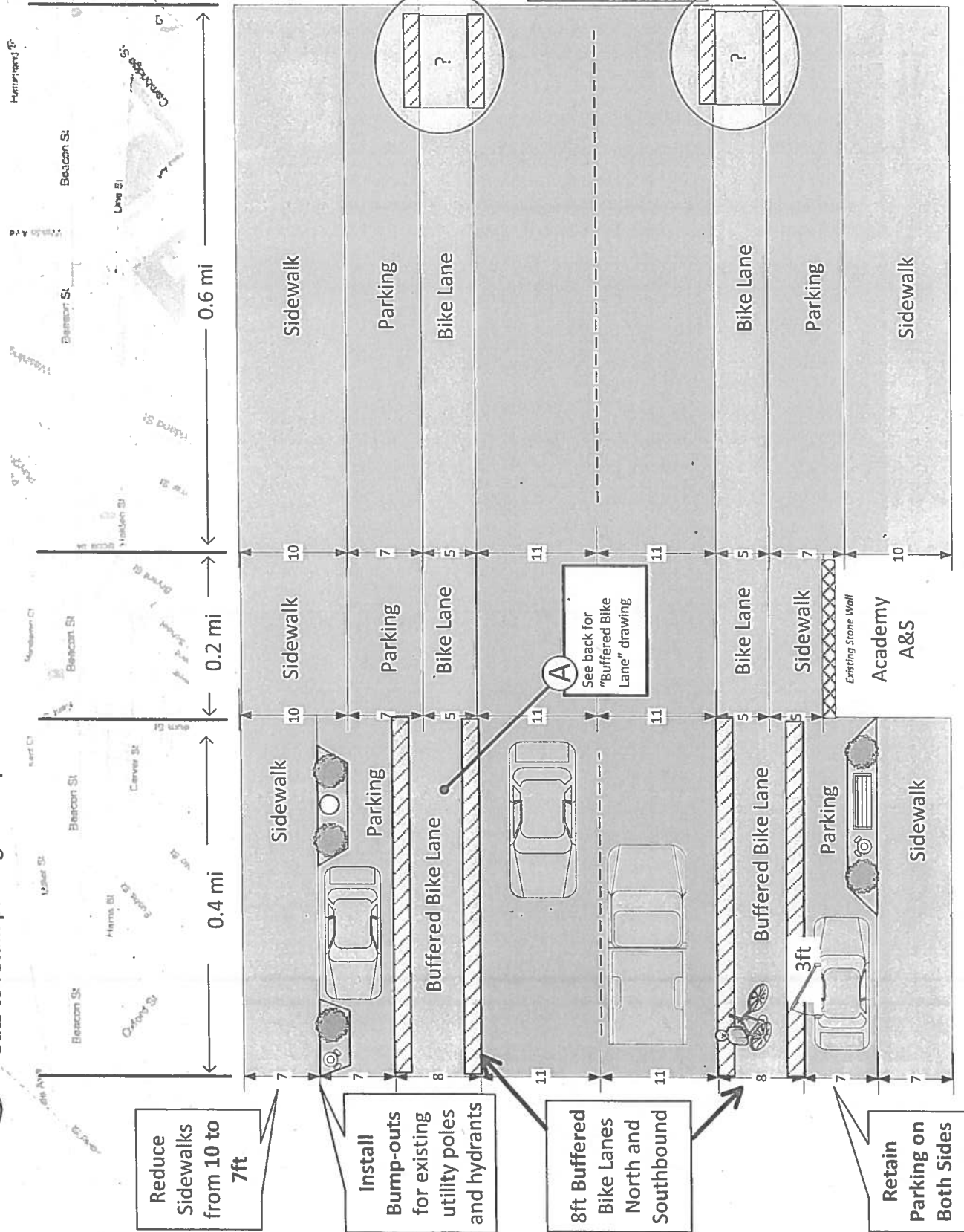
DOT Public Hearing, Monday Feb 4, 6:30pm @ JFK Elementary School – 5 Cherry St Somerville, Project #607209

Suggested Beacon Street Design: Reduce Sidewalks, Widen bike lanes add buffer zone, & install utility bump-outs to retain parking where possible



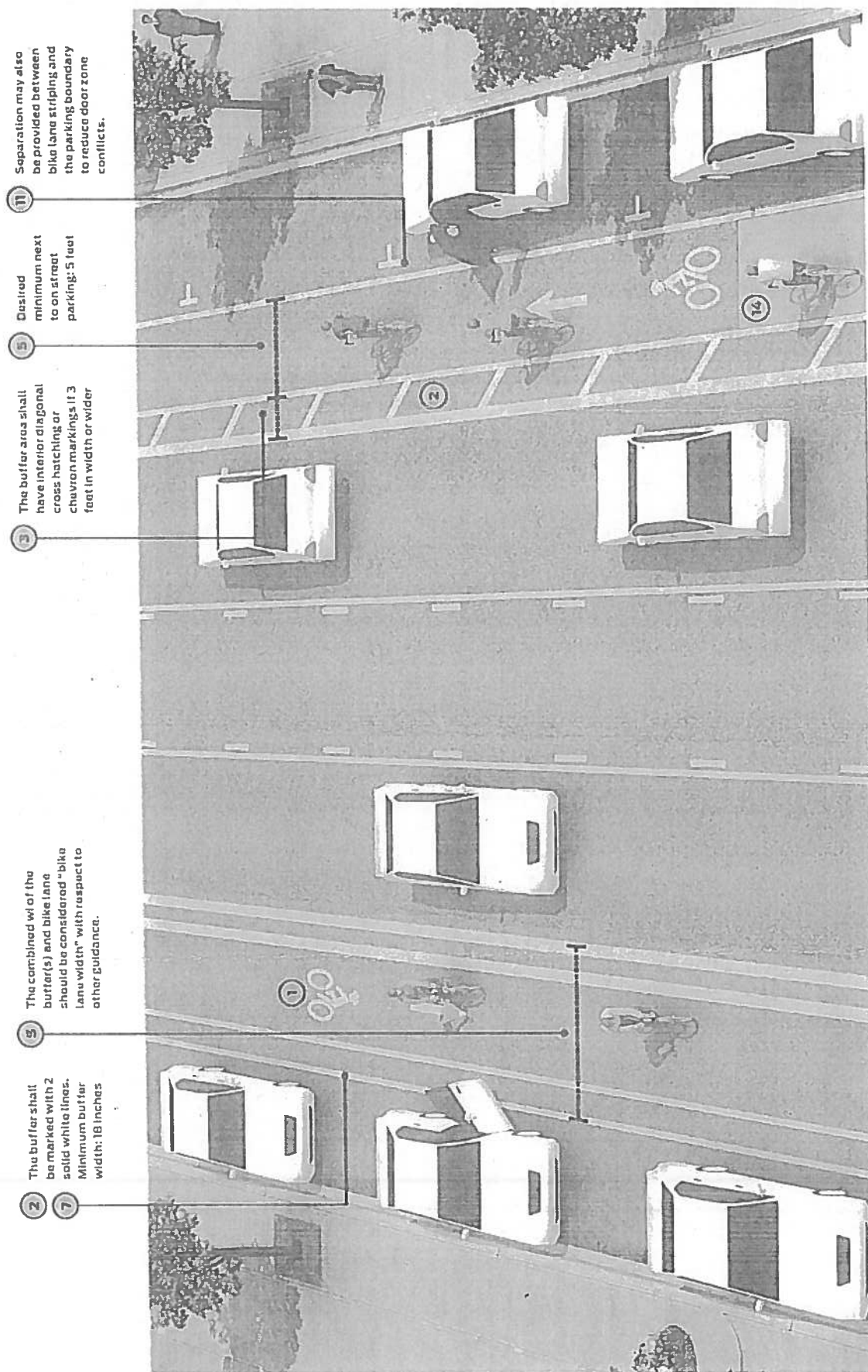
Alternatively;
Leave design as
is, simply
repave Beacon,
add streetscape
elements

Consider
Buffered Bike
Lane entire
length of
Beacon to
Inman



A Buffered Bike Lane Design Guidance

<http://nacto.org/cities-for-cycling/design-guide/bike-lanes/buffered-bike-lanes/>



Travel Side Buffer Configuration

Parking Side Buffer Configuration

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

Federal Aid Project
Somerville, MA

Beacon Street Project
Project File No 607209

RECEIVED

FEB 19 2013

MassDOT
PROJECT MANAGEMENT

This sheet is provided for your comments. Your input is solicited and appreciated. Please return your sheet, with comments, to a staff member at the meeting, or mail to:

Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer
MassDOT - Highway Division
10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116-3973
Attn: Project Management Section

The final date for receipt of written statements and exhibits for inclusion into the official hearing transcript will be ten (10) days after the Public Hearing.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

I JUST WANT TO SAY, AS A HOME OWNER AND SMALL
BUSINESS, BY TAKING WAY THE PARKING IT WILL BE DIFFICULT
TO DO BUSINESS, AND ALSO WHAT ABOUT STREET CLEANING -
SNOW - TRASH - AND ELDERLY PEOPLE TRYING TO CROSS WITH
THEIR GROCERIES, HANDYCAP PARKING AND SO ON
MAYBE IF THE SIDE WALKS CAN BE MADE LESS WIDE, SO
GIVE THE ROOM FOR THE BIKES TO GO BY, AND THE PARKING
WILL REMAINE AS IS, * IT WILL BE GREAT FOR EVERY ONE.
WE NEED THE PARKING. NOT A FANCY STREET.

SINCERELY, Vasiliki Yanakopoulos

Name: VASILIKI YANAKOPOULOS Title: HOME & BUSINESS OWNER

Organization: KIKI & ART HAIRSTYLING INC.

Address: 305-307 BEACON ST.

SOMERVILLE, MA. 02143

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

Federal Aid Project
Somerville, MA

Beacon Street Project
Project File No 607209

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MassDOT - Highway Division
10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116-3973
Attn: Project Management Section

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PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

re - bicycle track

Dear Mr. Broderick,

Please do not install the bicycle track near the sidewalk. As a pedestrian struck by a bicycle (in a cross walk, no less) who has suffered from the injuries* - I want to speak for pedestrians who need protection too.

Name: Mrs P.J DALLEY Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: 34 Beacon Somerville Ma 02143

I was hospitalized, suffered for years. The cyclist wheeled away.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

Federal Aid Project
Somerville, MA

Beacon Street Project
Project File No 607209

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PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

I Live on Beacon street, I mostly Walk everywhere, ~~car~~
I don't own a car, However it is
Common Knowledge Beacon Street is
a hard place to find parking any less
parking would lower the property Value.
The Bike Plan that has ~~be~~ been made
does not sound safer. And will
be a pain for the Elderly and
disabled.

Name: Helen Tisserand Title: Opinion of Beacon Street
Organization:
Address: 30 Beacon Street ~~Beacon~~
Somerville MA

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

Federal Aid Project
Somerville, MA

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PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

Please make sure the sewer line is updated in front of our house first since it is very very old & collapsed in front of 34 Beacon already.

Dear Mr. Broderick, We are happy that the street will be repaired.

The parking in front of 34, 32 and 30 Beacon is very important to be preserved. Senior citizens and residents on the block need the parking to be near their homes.

I am very concerned about a cycle track near a sidewalk. Especially on the same level or mountable to the sidewalk with no protection for children or pedestrians on the sidewalk. Bicycles will use the street or sidewalk if the cycle track is not plowed. Please add more crosswalks and please use recognisable reflective white stripes.

Name: SONIA DALLEY Title: owner, resident & pedestrian. Thank You.

Organization: (part) owner of 30, 32 and 34 Beacon St.

Address: 32 Beacon St
Somerville, MA 02143

Somerville Beacon Street Mode Sharing Coalition

(Representing Beacon Street Community, Children's Safety, Bicycle Commuting, Residential and Business Parking Stakeholders, and all Road Users.)

Fr: Lauren Clayton 617.686.8829 (member, Institute Transportation Engineers, ergofix@hotmail.com)

Re: Beacon Street "Mode Sharing Alternative Plan – No Mountable Curbs"

Date: 04 February, 2013



Here's a mode sharing safety oriented plan that fairly accommodates all stakeholders.

1. Four lanes, end to end. Remove co-linear parking lines.
2. Sharrows painted 12" from curb or "(bike) May Use Full Lane"(preferred) signs, non periodic, only at the beginning of major block (see Curtis St.).
3. 10' wide striped bi-directional bike-ped sidewalks.
4. No noseouts, bulbouts, traffic islands, mountable curbs, raised crossings, reduced radius corners, green paint or bike boxes. Use inlaid "frost proof" brick for crossings (at street level) and sidewalks.
5. Signalized (push and hold) pedestrian crossings (many), w laser radar signs.
6. "No Parking – Street Sweeping/Plowing 7-9AM, inbound (or 5-7PM, outbound) signs, M-F.
7. 100% Retained parking, "Loading Zone 15 min Passenger" in front of laundry.

Use "Evergreen Signals", "Green Bike Zones", "Co Linear Bike Boxes" (ask me).

8. Take (by Eminent Domain) the "Wall" to provide sidewalk as necessary or (lane shift left (!)).
9. "Bikes Yield to Peds" signs on bi-directional sidewalks.
10. Upgrade bike corrals to four "Powderhouse Rings", locate bike rental off road.

Advantages include: mode sharing; 100% community parking retention; no dooring; no utility displacement; no Running Red Lights, No Contra Flow, and increased pedestrian safety.

Below: Willow and Summer, Jan 9, 2013 accident, mountable curb failure mode (pole and sign have been replaced); safer 9" non mountable curb on Summer.



Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Friday, February 15, 2013 2:52 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Beacon street reconstruction proposal - Somerville

>-----Original Message-----

>From: Ann Miklich [mailto:pipanna@earthlink.net]
>Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2013 11:27 AM
>To: DOT Feedback Highway
>Subject: Beacon street reconstruction proposal - Somerville
>

>I am writing as a longtime resident of Beacon St. (between Park and Oxford) to
>voice my opposition to the cycletrack portion of the proposed Beacon St.
>reconstruction project. There is certainly a need to improve Beacon street. The
>street surface is crumbling, sidewalks are in disrepair, the markings for the bike
>lanes are fading away and the street is incredibly inadequately lit at night.
>Addressing these issues would also address most of the safety concerns for
>Beacon st. Better planning for intersections and crosswalks would help with the
>other issues.

> The cycletrack would be a step in the wrong direction by making the street less
>safe for everyone. The cycletrack would narrow the road which creates myriad
>problems: unnecessary hardships for residents such as less parking in an area
>where it is already hard to park during peak use hours, not to mention during
>the kind of wintry weather we have just experience, hard for the businesses
>here to operate and for their patrons; harder and less safe for both motorists as
>certainly there are many cyclists who would avoid the cycletrack and stick to
>using the road. Pedestrians will need to watch for bikes in the track, bikes in the
>street as well as cars in the street. Actually everyone will have to watch out for
>more rather than less on a narrow and more congested street that has quite a
>number of driveways and intersections.

>I have heard that there are alternative plans to the cycletrack that would cause
>far less troubles and problems that would be safe for all.

>I urge the DOT to support one of those plans rather than this version to
>significantly improve Beacon street for everyone who uses it.

>Sincerely,
>Ann Miklich
>Somerville

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Friday, February 15, 2013 2:54 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Beacon St. cycle track (Somerville)

From: Henry McEuen [mailto:henry.mceuen@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2013 11:25 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: Beacon St. cycle track (Somerville)

1426 Cambridge St.
Cambridge, MA 02139

To whom it may concern:

I recently became aware of the proposed redesign of Beacon Street in Somerville. I am glad to see that the plan includes a protected cycle track for bicycles, and I hope that this remains in the final design. Ideally the cycle track would extend even farther, perhaps all the way to Inman Square, so that cyclists have the option of avoiding mixed traffic for more of the way.

I have lived in the Inman Square area for over six years, and I frequently travel on Beacon Street using all modes of transportation: picking up a Zipcar and driving north, walking to Washington St., as a passenger on the 83 bus, or, most frequently, cycling to Porter Square. The bike lanes added in recent years are an improvement, but they are narrow and are really only inviting to expert cyclists. I have to make a conscious effort to ride outside the door zone and even then I am still occasionally at risk. I have ridden on cycle tracks in Montreal before, and the difference that they make is astounding. The ride becomes much more pleasant and safe when the only interaction with cars is at intersections.

While it is important to consider the needs of all users of the street, this area is well-served by public transportation and there are a number of private parking options available for those who choose to drive. I would encourage the planners to not sacrifice cyclist safety in order to keep the existing number of parking spaces.

Sincerely,

Henry McEuen

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: Hayes Morrison [h Morrison@somervillema.gov]
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2013 5:02 PM
To: Paul Schimek; Broderick, Thomas (DOT)
Cc: Rabito, Luciano (DOT); patricia.jehlen@masenate.gov; Janice Delory; Holland, Shawn (DOT); DOT Feedback Highway; Dailey, Donny (DOT)
Subject: RE: Comment on Beacon St, Somerville project

Mr. Schimek,

Thank you for your interest in the City of Somerville's reconstruction project on Beacon Street. We appreciate your opinion and will take this email as comment.

-hayes

Hayes Morrison

Director of Transportation and Infrastructure | Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development
City of Somerville
93 Highland Avenue | Somerville, MA | 02143
617.625.6600 ext. 2522 | h Morrison@somervillema.gov
www.somervillema.gov

From: Paul Schimek [mailto:paul.schimek@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2013 4:55 PM
To: Thomas.f.broderick@dot.state.ma.us
Cc: luciano.rabito@mhd.state.ma.us; patricia.jehlen@masenate.gov; Janice Delory; shawn.holland@state.ma.us; Hayes Morrison; dot.feedback.highway@state.ma.us; Donny.Dailey2@dot.state.ma.us
Subject: Comment on Beacon St, Somerville project

Please see attached Word document.

Thanks,

Paul Schimek

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2013 3:27 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Support for Cycling Track on Beacon St Somerville

From: Maryann Heuston [mailto:mheuston@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 13, 2013 11:53 AM
To: katiehoward@gmail.com; DOT Feedback Highway; Holland, Shawn (DOT); hmorrison@somervillema.gov; jdelory@somervillema.gov
Subject: RE: Support for Cycling Track on Beacon St Somerville

Katie,
Thanks so much for your feedback on this very important project for the City and Ward 2 in particular. The attention to Pedestrian safety as well as cyclist safety is a very important aspect of this project and the final product will greatly improve the quality of life for those who live on and near and travel Beacon st.

Maryann

Maryann Heuston
Ward 2 Alderman
Somerville, MA

Date: Wed, 13 Feb 2013 11:27:44 -0500
Subject: Support for Cycling Track on Beacon St Somerville
From: katiehoward@gmail.com
To: dot.feedback.highway@state.ma.us; mheuston@hotmail.com; shawn.holland@state.ma.us; hmorrison@somervillema.gov; jdelory@somervillema.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

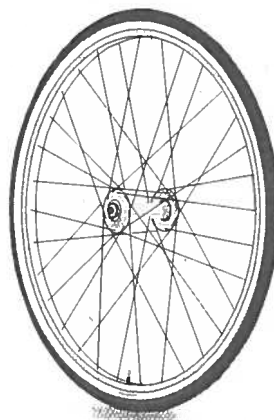
I am writing in support of a well-designed cycling track on Beacon St in Somerville, MA. I live at 87 Marion St, 02143. My husband and I both bike regularly. Biking allows us to not have a car, contribute to a more sustainable future and improves our physical health. We have both been struck by vehicles while biking and I believe that providing the infrastructure for biking makes it more popular, improves safety because of both an increased number of cyclists and because we would be separated from vehicles, and with increased bicyclists creates a better motor vehicle experience in both driving and parking because less people use cars.

I also think it is important to build raised crosswalks that allow pedestrians to be visible from the street so that cars turning in can see pedestrians. Also I support raised cycletracks at cross streets with no signals for added protection so that cars slow down when turning onto side streets.

Thank you for your time. Sincerely,
Katie Howard

February 14, 2013

Thomas F. Broderick, P.E.,
Chief Engineer, MassDOT,
10 Park Plaza,
Boston, MA 02116,
Attention: Project Management Section,
Project File No. 607209



John S. Allen
7 University Park
Waltham, MA 02453-1523
jsallen@bikexpert.com
(781) 891-9307 voice/fax

- Technical writing, translation
- Mechanical design, acoustics
- Consultant on bicycling
- Effective Cycling instructor

Dear Mr. Broderick:

I speak as a cycling advocate of 35 years standing in the Boston area.

Some other cyclists will comment on the Beacon street project in favor of "cycle tracks" – barrier-separated bikeways in the street corridor. My impression is that a goal of this advocacy is to gain acceptance and official sanction for the concept of "cycle tracks", to get a "foot in the door", so to speak – while neglecting to examine whether these actually are practical and safe at this location.

A stated goal of this advocacy is to attract novice and child cyclists to ride on Beacon Street. That would be a laudable goal if it could be achieved safely, but it cannot – and it leads to serious problems for all other users of the corridor, including the bulk of the cycling population. This goal plays on the widespread belief that safety can be increased by removing cyclists from the Beacon Street roadway; and on the misconception that rear-end collisions are the most common and serious car-bike crash problem. Neither of these beliefs is accurate.

Also, some political leaders appear to believe that the proposed design is innovative and forward-looking and will resound to their credit.

My approach to the Beacon Street project, as to others, is to examine technical details, consult the research literature, and take designs on a case-by-case basis. You may find my positive comments online about separate bikeways in the street corridor on 9th Avenue, in New York City, which has a traffic signal at every intersection and no driveway crossings, and on University Avenue in Madison, Wisconsin, where a contraflow on-street bikeway serves cyclists at the University of Wisconsin. On the other hand, I opposed the design implemented on Concord Avenue in Cambridge, but I proposed a different design which also would have a separate bikeway in the street corridor -- entirely on the south side, with one signalized crossing rather than there also being a bikeway on the north side, where it crosses 24 driveways and 8 streets in 3000 feet.

I agree with proponents of the cycle tracks that Beacon Street is not very good for bicycling at this time. The deteriorated road surface is one serious problem, worsened by delay in reconstruction. Bike lanes in the door zone of parked cars, on this roadway of marginal width, are another problem, and intersections pose yet a third.

The fundamental issue with the reconstruction is how to address these problems to serve the needs of all users of Beacon Street as optimally as possible.

My preference

There are far better solutions than the proposed cycle tracks. As a cyclist, my preference is to widen the traveled area of the street. I know of two ways to do that:

- The one I most like was put forward by David Olmsted, and would narrow the sidewalks to 7 feet -- still ample -- in order to widen the roadway and allow bike lanes to be safely outside the door zone of parked cars. As Olmsted has suggested, bump-outs around utility poles would avoid the need to move most of them. This solution would entail little or no reduction in the on-street parking which is important to residents and businesses along Beacon Street. This option also would allow improvement east of Washington Street, where parking demand is high and the proposed design would make no improvement. I am pleased to hear that the design consultant considers Mr. Olmsted's option to be feasible.
- Another option would remove parking on one side of the street, as already proposed in the current plan, so a bike lane on the other side can be placed safely clear of parked vehicles.

As a bicyclist, I'd be happy with either of these options, or a combination of them. I understand that parking removal is not popular with residents, but on the other hand, it is already under discussion, and with bicyclists on the widened roadway rather than behind parked cars, safety is better than with the proposed cycle tracks. Far fewer parking spaces need be removed, because blind conflicts would not occur between bicyclists and turning motorists at driveways. (I'll have more to say about that later).

Also, attention needs to be paid to intersections so that cyclists have a clear line of travel through them, and so motorists are directed to merge across cyclists' line of travel when preparing right turns. This can be accomplished by removing a few parking spaces before major intersections, so as to create right-turn pockets.

Other desirable amenities would include bicycle parking, and speed tables at crosswalks so as to control motorists' speed. Traffic-law enforcement and signal timing also can help with this. An educational campaign would inform travelers as to how to use the corridor safely and efficiently. Parking management could lead to more efficient and convenient use of available parking resources, to the advantage of resident and businesses.

I also note that a bikeway in the unused width of the Fitchburg Line rail corridor has been proposed, and this would provide a nearby parallel route suitable for timid or child cyclists. This possibility has already been discussed by the City of Cambridge.

The proposed design

The proposed design would have a sidepath ("cycle track") behind parked cars over much of the southwest side of Beacon Street, and a bike lane behind a mountable curb (also called a "cycle track", though it would function as a bike lane) on much of the northeast side. In the section from Museum Street to Park Street, parking would be removed on the south side, and a sidewalk would be added there. This segment would have bike lanes on both sides, but due to the narrowing of the roadway, the one on the north side would be in the door zone of parked cars, as at present. East of Washington Street, there would be no change from the present configuration, with parking on both sides, and bike lanes in the door zone.

Technical issues

Let me now describe some technical problems with the proposed design, in detail:

A primary one is that the Beacon Street corridor is not wide enough to accommodate the sections with cycle tracks without very serious impairment of traffic flow. The reduction of on-street parking would inevitably result in a major increase in illegal parking and standing, as has been at least indirectly acknowledged by the Mayor of Somerville (in a letter to Beacon Street business owner Domenic Ruccio):

...fuel deliveries will occur as they have always occurred – and at the same locations. Either the trucks will cross the mountable curb of the cycle track to enter the driveways they currently use or, as in the case of the photograph you sent in, they will park in front of the abutter. They would do this in the new design by mounting the cycle track and blocking it for the limited time needed to deliver the fuel.

In other words, fuel trucks will do what they have always done: single-park or double-park in front of the delivery location and obstruct traffic flow (bicycle or auto) until the delivery is complete.”

But it isn't the same, because, without parking, the fuel trucks and other delivery vehicles on the side without parking will have to stop in the cycle track rather than in the parking lane; and parking spaces on the other side will be more heavily occupied.

There are other technical issues.

- Most car-bicycle collisions occur due to crossing and turning movements. “Right hook” and “left cross” collisions are the most common types and the most common causes of fatalities to cyclists in urban areas. Beacon Street has dozens of residential and commercial driveways, and several street entrances and crossings. Cycle tracks behind parking trap bicyclists where they are hidden from crossing and turning motorists. Lacking parking setbacks at every intersection *and driveway*, cycle tracks force motorists to turn across the path of bicyclists they cannot see.

In that context, here is another quote, from Somerville Planning Director Hayes Morrison:

“Neither the AASHTO green book nor the MUTCD have any parking restrictions at driveways. At these locations, parking restrictions will be consistent with the [Somerville] April 2011 Traffic Regulations, which state that parking is prohibited ‘in front of any driveway, including 2 feet in either direction from the driveway.’

No current legal spaces at either side of driveways on the southbound/even side of the street will be eliminated.”

A 2-foot clear zone to parking either side of a driveway may be sufficient for safety of pedestrians on a sidewalk, but it by no means provides adequate sight triangles between motorists entering driveways, and bicyclists traveling at speeds up to and beyond 20 miles per hour, concealed behind a line of parked motor vehicles. Furthermore, the AASHTO Green Book is not AASHTO's reference on bikeway design. That is the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, which includes numerous warnings about the hazards of bikeways behind parking and which cross driveways.

- Motorists who are aware of the driveway crossing hazard will slow to a crawl, blocking traffic in the street. The motorists are supposed to yield to bicyclists, but because of the protruding hoods of their vehicles, they can't see the bicyclists, and the bicyclists will have to yield. Safe bicycle speed also, then, is very slow.
- A bikeway behind parking designated for one-way travel also promotes two-way travel, leading to greatly increased risks, because motorists and cyclists converge on each other from unexpected directions.
- Dividing up the width of a road corridor reduces the usable width due to the increasing number of buffers required. Specifically, the proposed design trades a left-side door zone for a right-side door zone. And, then with the "reveal" (low curb) on the sidewalk side of the bikeway, only about 4 feet of its width will be clear of these hazards. Motorists will open their doors on the street side, no longer in conflict with bicyclists, but instead in conflict with motor traffic.
- The ability to overtake on cycle tracks is limited by their width, and as the one behind parking reaches capacity, all bicyclists will be limited to the speed of the slowest.
- Over the years, the traffic mix is going to change in unpredictable ways, with different types of vehicles of different widths, and which travel at different speeds. A single, wide roadway can adapt dynamically to different traffic mixes and can be restriped if needed. The unchangeable, literally cast-in-stone reconfiguration proposed for this street offers no such flexibility. Cycle track installations in other cities are typically implemented using striping, traffic islands and removable barriers, retaining flexibility for reconfiguration without full-depth reconstruction. Cambridge, and now Somerville, are unique in grasping the opportunity presented by full-depth reconstruction to narrow roadways irrevocably.
- Where would residents put out trash barrels? Answer: on the cycle track, if Concord Avenue in Cambridge offers any example.
- Pedestrian-bicycle conflicts increase, and particularly at intersections and bus stops.
- Cycle tracks are difficult to keep clear of snow, ice and trash. That is particularly true of the proposed design. A snowplow truck would have to keep clear of the mountable curb on the northeast side, or risk damaging it. The gutter at the foot of the mountable curb is a conduit for stormwater, and at a time of melting and freezing, it becomes a sheet of ice. Keeping a cycle track between parking and a sidewalk clear of snow and ice so that it is rideable is very difficult. By way of contrast, a conventional, crowned street profile carries meltwater away to the curbs.

The research literature

Repeated claims of safety for cyclists have been made for the proposed design, backed up by erroneous and selective interpretations of research literature.

The Design Exception Report for the project cites a Montreal study which claims a 28% reduction in crashes on cycle tracks, compared with streets. That study lacks credibility, because it makes invalid comparisons, and also

fails to count injuries to pedestrians. A careful analysis of that study is available here: <http://john-s-allen.com/montreal-kary.html>.

The Design Exception Report also cites the large and careful 2007 Copenhagen study. That report shows that the overall crash rate increased by 10% and the crash rate for cyclists, by 30%. The conclusions are unequivocal, see <http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1422969945625.54796.1574017310&l=6d6baf5bf4>. This is despite the much smaller number of driveways on the Copenhagen installations. The design of the Copenhagen installations is much more ample and forgiving than that of the proposed Somerville installation. The Design Exception Report has turned the Copenhagen report on its head, claiming that it actually shows a reduction in the crash rate.

European practice is often held up as a model for Americans to follow, but it should be noted that there has been much opposition to underdesigned bikeways in Europe, and particularly in Germany. Here, for example, is a quote from Tilman Bracher of the German Cycling Federation, commenting in 2007 about a study of bicycle crashes in Berlin conducted by that city's police department:

The problems with sidepath placement leading to crashes at intersections and driveways are known to police and planners in Berlin, and the knowledge has spread... Bikeways are now, as a rule, planned as bike lanes on the roadway, or bicyclists ride in mixed traffic. Many sidepaths have been removed. We are on the way to make the new planning that started with the police study mainstream.

This quote and other documents illustrating the same point may be found linked at <http://www.bikexpert.com/bikepol/facil/sidepath/index.htm>

The example which I think is most relevant to the proposed design is from Davis, California, where one of three designs tried in the 1970s was bikeways behind parked vehicles, a design quickly abandoned due to hazards recognized by bicycling advocates of all shades of opinion, in a community with heavy bicycle use and a climate of strong support for bicycling. A summary of the Davis experience, with links to documentation, is here: <http://john-s-allen.com/blog/?p=1927>

Project documentation, and what it shows:

Plans for all MassDOT projects are supposed to be posted online at 25 percent design review, along with a basic project checklist that includes measures of pedestrian and bicycle accommodation.

Overhead views were hung on the walls and placed on tables at a January 28 public meeting so meeting attendees could write suggestions on them, and then these were withdrawn for review by the consultant. Plans were not online as of the February 4 public hearing. The only engineering drawings online were three cross-section drawings. The available documentation did not show anything, for example, about traffic signal timing, construction phases, or utility connections. The overhead views showed only the proposed treatment, without reference to existing conditions. The overhead views were not dimensioned. Similar drawings were posted at the February 4 meetings, and again, these did not qualify as engineering documents.

In reply to a request for the plans from a Somerville resident between the times of the two meetings, the City sent an e-mail with the same watercolor paintings of conceptual street views which were already available in

the Design Exception Report. Just looking at them, it is obvious that they are inaccurate; for example, the cycle track on the side with the mountable curb is shown much wider than the 6 feet described in the cross-section.

Some highly unfortunate design elements also are shown. The mountable curb is of brick. Does anyone involved in the design of this project understand what it is like to ride a bicycle over a brick surface with a side slope? One of the paintings shows a series of traffic islands with plantings, which do not correspond to any of the described cross sections. These , and a traffic island in another drawing, force motorists to make wide right turns from the left of the island, with cyclists to its right. It's bad enough to require motorists to turn right from the left side of bicyclists, but thanks to the width of the island, bicyclists often will be outside the scope of the motorists' right-side rear view mirrors.

All of the watercolors represent daytime lighting conditions, but they show astonishingly low levels of traffic of all kinds, -- bicycle, motor and pedestrian, a traffic volume which might be expected at 3 AM on a Sunday morning. One drawing shows a cyclist riding the wrong way on a cycle track. No directional markings are shown.

At the February 4 public hearing, the design consultant described a new design element: a 3-inch "reveal" between the cycle track and sidewalk. This is another name for a low curb, a longitudinal step. It would sweep the front wheel of a bicycle aside, preventing balancing the bicycle and resulting in a hard fall. It would also complicate snow clearance.

These issues do not promote confidence in the functionality of the design, or in the public process.

Summary

To summarize: I strongly advise that the Beacon Street reconstruction be configured to provide more travel width in the roadway, so that bicyclists and motorists can share it safely and amicably; that intersection design reflect best practices of traffic flow, and particularly, destination positioning so that drivers merge before turning rather than turning abruptly across the line of travel of cyclists; that motorist speed be controlled through speed tables, signal timing and traffic law enforcement; that education and parking management be part of the planning for the project; and that alternate, truly safe and separate routes be developed for cyclists who are uncomfortable with riding on an improved Beacon Street.

Very truly yours,



cc:

Luciano Rabito, MassDOT
Shawn Holland, MassDOT
Senator Patricia Jehlen
Janice Delory, City of Somerville
Hayes Morrison, City of Somerville.

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: Hayes Morrison [hmorrison@somervillema.gov]
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2013 1:02 PM
To: dario21@comcast.net; Holland, Shawn (DOT); John Connolly; Bruce Desmond; Dennis Sullivan; William White; aldermanroche@comcast.net
Subject: RE: Cycle track – Letter of concern

Mr. Velasquez,

Thank you for your interest in the City of Somerville's reconstruction project on Beacon Street. We appreciate your opinion and will take this email as comment. There are a few aspects of the design we would like you to be aware of:

Changes have been made to the design, which will now keep parking directly in front of Dali Restaurant. The parking on the other side (northbound) would be removed (approximately 101 legal parking spaces). The cycletrack will end at the intersection of Washington Street and Beacon Street, south side of the intersection will have parking both sides of the street. The City of Somerville is actively looking at two parcels to rent spaces from to return at least 35 spaces in an off street location or two in the corridor. Also Washington Street is a 2 hour parking area; customers can park for up to two hours without getting a ticket.

Beacon Street is the most heavily cycled corridor in the greater Boston area. This year 438 cyclists were counted entering the intersection of Beacon and Washington during the evening commute during our spring traffic counts. This was more than 25% of the traffic at that intersection. Counts have been taken at that intersection since 2009, during which time the numbers of cyclist has increased and car traffic has decreased. This corridor is also MassDOT's #1 crash location for bicyclist. Providing safe, equitable travel for all modes; motorist, pedestrians, transit users, and cyclist is a priority of the City of Somerville. We believe this design provides for that.

-hayes

Hayes Morrison

Director of Transportation and Infrastructure | Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development
City of Somerville
93 Highland Avenue | Somerville, MA | 02143
617.625.6600 ext. 2522 | hmorrison@somervillema.gov
www.somervillema.gov

From: dario21@comcast.net [mailto:dario21@comcast.net]
Sent: Wednesday, February 13, 2013 9:09 PM
To: Hayes Morrison; shawn.holland@state.ma.us; John Connolly; Bruce Desmond; Dennis Sullivan; William White; aldermanroche@comcast.net
Subject: Cycle track – Letter of concern

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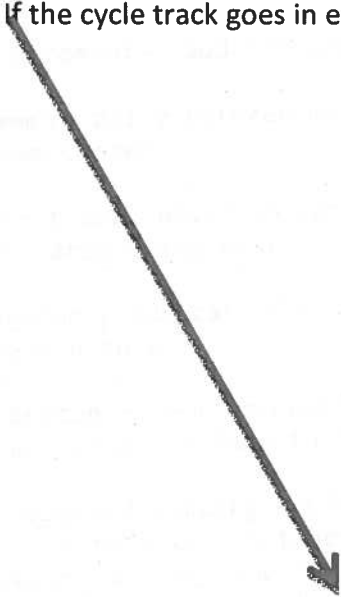
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Subject: Cycle track – Letter of concern

Cycle track – Letter of concern

To whom it may concern

I am an employee of Dali and cyclist by hobby; I am very concern on the proposed Cycle Track on Beacon Street in Somerville. I love cycling in the city but we need to take a close look at how this will impact the small owners in this area. As parking is limited and by cutting into already limited parking space it will be detrimental that can impact as our customers in Dali will have no place to park. Working in Dali for the past 8 years I am very concern and worry of the direct economic impact this will have to our business hurting my financial pocket which is worrisome on this slow economic recovery.

- View the map of where Dali is, the only parking to customer is beacon street, as the washington street is for residential parking only
- If the cycle track goes in effect were will our customers park?



5. The roadway will not conform to Massachusetts DOT bicycle accommodation standards.
6. The cycle track will be an uncomfortable ride due to changes in level at street crossings and driveways.
7. The mountable curb will be dangerous to cyclists who need to transition between the track and the street.
8. The design speed of the track is significantly less than the design speed of the vehicle.

Let me expand upon these points:

1. Legal grey area:

Massachusetts law has no definition for cycle tracks. As currently designed, the proposed cycle track is part of the sidewalk, and therefore considered a pedestrian facility.

Massachusetts law does not specify how a bicycle should operate on a sidewalk, except to say that bicycles must yield to pedestrians, that sidewalk riding is prohibited in commercial districts, and that sidewalk riding is permitted outside of commercial districts unless explicitly prohibited by cities or towns.

Massachusetts law does not specifically extend the rights and responsibilities of pedestrians to bicyclists operating on the sidewalk.

Massachusetts law goes on to say that motor vehicles must yield to pedestrians within a crosswalk, but also indicates that a pedestrian must not step into the path of a motor vehicle that is so close as to constitute an immediate hazard.

This means that bicycles operating on a cycle track will need to be prepared to stop at every intersection whether there is a green light in there favor or not.

When a collision between a motor vehicle and a bicycle occurs where the bicycle track crosses a street, liability will be uncertain, and will likely be declared the bicyclists fault.

2. Driveway and intersection crossings.

Even if the liability issues were resolved by changes to Massachusetts law, there will still be a problem with motor vehicle traffic not expecting faster moving bicycle traffic in a separate stream on the sidewalk.

In Cambridge there is a bicycle track along Concord Avenue near Fresh Pond that is held up as an example of what this cycle track will be like. I recently traversed that area to see what it would be like, and within two streets, I was right hooked by an automobile turning right and crossing my path. It was necessary for me to take evasive action to avoid a collision.

I expect even more problems of this nature on the proposed cycle track due to the larger amount of traffic turning onto side streets.

3. Parked cars:

Bicyclists traveling along the cycle track will be obscured by parked cars, and will not be visible to overtaking or oncoming traffic. Right and left turns will be made without motorists being able to determine whether the way is clear.

This will make the problems described above even more serious.

4. Pedestrians, debris, garbage cans, and snow.

Because the cycle track is legally a side walk, there is no law prohibiting pedestrians from walking or standing on the path. Instead, we will need to rely on their courtesy to keep the track clear.

On garbage day, trash and recycling containers will no doubt obstruct the track.

Although we have been promised that the cycle track will be kept clear of snow in the winter, I do not believe it. I look to the same promises made regarding the Concord Avenue facility in Cambridge. After a recent snowstorm, the roadway was clear, while the cycle track remains with a couple of inches of snow. Ironically portions of the sidewalk had been cleared by abutters and were free of snow.

5. The roadway will not conform to Massachusetts DOT bicycle accommodation standards.

Massachusetts law does not require that bicyclist use a bicycle lane or any other bicycle facility. Bicyclists who understand the risks of the cycle track will continue to ride in the street.

The Department of Transportation has specific guidelines regarding bicycle accommodations [MGL Ch 87]. Separate accommodations are defined as a bike lane or shoulder, or combination parking lane/shoulder that is at least 13' wide. Shared bicycle and pedestrian accommodations are defined as a shoulder, in absence of a separate sidewalk for pedestrians.

The guidelines specifically state:

"Where onstreet parking is provided, shoulders or bicycle lanes should be maintained between on-street parking and the travel lane."

6. The cycle track will be an uncomfortable ride due to changes in level at street crossings and driveways.

Unlike many of the cycle tracks in Copenhagen, this cycle track will cross numerous private driveways. Again, using the Concord Avenue track as a local example, the track or driveway will need to be adjusted to have corresponding levels. It does not appear that the design of the driveway crossings will be sufficient to allow for an un-interrupted cycle track, which will require a continual up and down motion.

7. The mountable curb will be dangerous to cyclists who need to

transition between the track and the street.

Although the separation between the cycle track and the street - where there is no parking - will be a so-called "mountable curb". This structure will be dangerous for cyclists who need to depart the track for various reasons, such as passing slower traffic, avoiding obstructions, making left turns, or controlling a right turn lane for safety. Crossing the curb in either direction will be an awkward maneuver, but particularly while trying to remount the track.

Additionally, cyclists on the track who inadvertently drift toward the street will be met with an unpleasant surprise when their wheel is diverted by the sudden slope of the track.

Additionally, the curb will be extra slippery in wet or snowy weather.

8. The design speed of the track is significantly less than the design speed of the vehicle.

The design speed of a bicycle should be at least 15-20 MPH. Faster if there is any sort of downhill, even a slight one, as there will be eastbound from Oxford Street.

It appears that the cycle track design speed will be no greater than 10-15 MPH at best, which will severely impact the effectiveness of bicycle travel.

In addition to the previous points, if the cycle tracks are built, I would like to see modifications to the design to insure the safety of three streams of traffic.

At each intersection, there will need to be separate phases for the traffic on the main way, and traffic on the cycle track to avoid the conflicts between through bicycle traffic and turning motor vehicle traffic.

Even if it is decided that separate phases will not be implemented, the bicycle tracks must be equipped with sensors to trigger the signals, the same as motor vehicle traffic.

Alternatively to allow for better sight lines and merging of right turning traffic, the cycle track will need to be discontinued some distance before each intersection to allow for a safe and comfortable merge area. This will likely require that even more parking spaces will be needed than is currently contemplated.

Finally, I would like to point out that although the separated cycle tracks are claimed to be needed due to high accident rates, that most automobile/bicycle collisions occur at intersection, and not mid-block. In fact the vast majority of fatal bicycle accidents in the Boston area have been "right hooks" caused by traffic turning into the cyclist's path. These cycle tracks will make these types of accidents even more prevalent, not prevent them.

2/14/13

Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209

Paul Schimek, Ph.D.
50 Saint Rose
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

To: Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer
Attention: Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209 (Beacon Street,
Somerville)

Dear Mr. Broderick,

I am a transportation professional, bicyclist, and longtime bicycling advocate. I am writing to express a number of concerns regarding the design of the proposed project. I strongly urge MassDOT to reject the current design because it contains unproved, experimental features (cycle tracks) that will increase crashes and injuries, according to a large body of research. Approving this design will create a precedent that may lead to the widespread deployment of these dangerous facilities across the Commonwealth.

Over my career I have served as a member of bicycling committees for the City of Boston and the City of Cambridge, and have served as a member of the board of directors of both the Charles River Wheelmen and the Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition, including a year as President of the latter.

I would like to point out the following items in this comment letter:

- The known hazards of cycle tracks that have emerged from the research have been deliberately misinterpreted by the City of Somerville's consultants, DCI.
- Recent bicycle crash data from Cambridge show that cycle tracks do not address the safety problem, and would make things worse.
- Because of the known issues concerning paths adjacent to roadways, MassDOT's design guidelines do not permit the design that DCI has proposed.
- The intersection hazards of cycle tracks have been addressed to a certain extent by New York City, but the DCI design does not even include these features.
- Adding cycle tracks as proposed would create an ambiguous legal situation for bicyclists, and would expose them to greater harassment and assault from drivers of motor vehicles.
- There are much better alternatives to the currently proposed design.

Known Hazards of Cycle Tracks

The Design Exception Report submitted by DCI to the City of Somerville references two studies relating to cycle track safety:

1. S. U. Jensen study on bike lanes and cycle tracks in Copenhagen.

DCI state that the reported crash statistics in the study represent "only a comparison between a predicted model value and the actual observed value. A much more appropriate comparison would be to compare the crash results from before the installation of the cycle tracks to the crash results after the installation of the cycle tracks." This statement from DCI is false: as is well known, it is not appropriate to compare before and after numbers of injuries or crashes without adjusting for known confounding factors such as a change in the number of bicyclists and the tendency of improvements to be added at locations where there have previously been crashes.

In fact, this careful and large study showed a 10% **increase** in overall crashes due to installing cycle tracks, after controlling for citywide trends and the regression to mean effect. Notably, it showed a statistically significant **24% increase in bike crashes at intersections**, and the reason that the overall increase was not higher, is that the data showed an unusually high percent of crashes not at intersections (which had a statistically insignificant 13% decrease). The study showed a **129% increase in right-turning bike-motor vehicle collisions**. There was also an **80% increase in bicycle and pedestrian crashes** (these are from Table 4 of the paper included in the Design Exception Report). This careful study does **not** support safety benefits of cycle tracks. Jensen says bluntly, **"Bicyclists' safety has worsened due to these facilities."** Moreover, there is reason to believe that the results would be worse in Massachusetts, because Copenhagen drivers are trained to yield to bicyclists before turning right, and because Copenhagen has worked hard to improve intersection safety of cycle tracks, such as by prohibiting parking anywhere near intersections.

2. Lusk, Furth, et al. study on cycle tracks in Montreal.

DCI instead points to this study as showing that cycle tracks improve safety. This study compared cycle track streets with selected nearby control streets with no cycle tracks (and no bike lanes). However, the "control" streets were **not** comparable to the cycle track streets in terms of lane width, parking, traffic volume, and traffic speed. The study concluded that the relative risk of cycle tracks is only 0.72 that of control streets -- about 28% fewer crashes. However, the study also found that on three of the six cycle tracks studied the risk was lower, but on the other three there was no statistically significant difference. Why is this? The authors do not explain, except to say that "the sample of six cycle tracks was too small to determine which factors make some safer." They found crash rates of 2, 3, 14, 16, 16, and 19 per million bicycle km for the 6 different cycle track segments, a nearly 10-fold increase in risk between the safest and the most dangerous. Why is that? They don't address this. What kind of crashes are these? Intersections? Turning cars? Bike-bike? Bike-ped? They do not know from their data. All other studies that have looked at collision types (such as the Jensen study) show a large increase in right hook crashes. Given that they did not look at crash types, did provide comparable controls, found that only 3 out of 6 cycle tracks were safer than the selected control, and found that there was a nearly 10-fold difference in crash rates on the safest cycle track compared to the least safe one, we can have no confidence at all in the conclusions of this study.

I also wish to reference a third study:

3. Teschke, et al, "Route Infrastructure and the Risk of Injuries to Bicyclists: A Case-Crossover Study

A more recent study of bicycle facilities in Toronto & Vancouver can be found at <http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/pdf/10.2105/AJPH.2012.300762>. This study has been cited to show the safety benefits of cycle tracks, but it was done when there were **no cycle tracks in Toronto and hardly any Vancouver**. Almost all of the "cycle track" mileage at the time of the study consisted of an ordinary bike path on the 1-mile Burrard Bridge, a segment which has no intersections or driveways. Their conclusions were based on finding 2 injuries on cycle tracks but predicting 10 injuries based on their subject's travel routes. However, this study did find, with strong evidence, that streetcar tracks increase the risk of bicycle injuries by 300% (95% confidence interval of 180% to 510%), riding downhill increases the risk by 230% (95% confidence interval of 170% to 310%) and that on-street parking increases the risk by 40%.

Recent Bicycle Crash Data from Cambridge

Cambridge did a study of all police-reported car-bike collisions between 2004 and 2008. Beacon Street in Somerville is likely to have very similar collision circumstances as in adjacent Cambridge. The study classified the collisions into the following types:

Crash Type	Count	Percent
Motorist left turn*	93	21.6%
Bicyclist hits door of parked car	87	20.2%
Bicyclist fails to yield at sign or signal	25	5.8%
Motorist fails to yield at sign or signal*	5	1.2%
Other "angle" crash at intersection*	27	6.3%
Motorist right turn*	45	10.5%
Motorist sideswipes bicyclist	22	5.1%
Bicyclist wrong way (not otherwise indicated)	23	5.3%
Bicyclist in crosswalk	22	5.1%
Bicyclist turns left into motor vehicle*	11	2.6%
Other (driveway, rear end, U-turn)	70	16%
TOTAL	430	100%
*Bicyclist could have been on the wrong side of the road.		

These results show that *the large majority of crashes are intersection related*, and that 1/3 involve a motorist turning right or left at an intersection or driveway (21.6% + 10.5%=32.1%). "Doorings" – where a bicyclist riding in "the door zone" is hit by a suddenly opened door – account for fully 20% of car-bike collisions in Cambridge. Sideswipe collisions account for only 5% of crashes. Bicycling on the wrong side of the road is also a major factor among collisions, since many of the collision types other than the 5% labeled "bicyclist wrong way" also involve wrong-way bicyclists.

Based on this data, cycle tracks are likely to increase crashes to the extent that they:

- Constrain cyclists to ride to the right of right-turning vehicles at all times.

- Reduce the visibility of bicyclists to turning and entering motorists.
- Encourage wrong-way riding.

On the other hand, removing on-street parking can reduce car-bike collisions by:

- Eliminating the door zone.
- Providing more width on the street so that novice cyclists are not afraid to ride outside the door zone.
- Provide more overall road width to reduce sideswipe collisions.

The Proposed Design Does not Follow MassDOT Standards

The MassDOT Project Development & Design Guide does not include cycle tracks as proposed for Beacon Street as an approved bike accommodation. Given the hazards of urban paths alongside ordinary roads, this gap is not an oversight but a deliberate policy, as can be seen from the language of the Guide.

The Guide states clearly that “Approaches to bicycle accommodation include bicycle lanes, the use of shoulders, and shared roadways.” However, “Off-road shared-use or bicycle paths (see Chapter 11 for more details) are also an option for bicycle accommodation **in some limited cases**. (p. 5-19)” These “shared use paths” are **not** cycle tracks, since “Shared use paths are facilities on exclusive right-of-way with minimal cross flow by motor vehicles.” This is not the case for Beacon Street, which has 4 cross streets and 22 driveways on the northbound section of proposed cycle track and 4 cross streets and 17 driveways on the southbound section.

Furthermore, shared use paths are not acceptable “accommodation” for bicyclists on city streets, who will have ample reason (and legal right) to continue using the street, not the path. The Guide specifically states that “Shared use paths should be thought of as a complementary system of off-road transportation routes for bicyclists and others that serves as a necessary extension to the roadway network. The presence of a shared use path near a roadway does not eliminate the need to accommodate bicyclists within a roadway. (p. 5-24)” Echoing the AASHTO Bicycle Guide, Chapter 11 provides some more detail on this point:

“Shared use paths are not a substitute for street improvements, even if there is sufficient space to locate the path adjacent to the roadway. Some operational problems with paths adjacent to roads are:

- Bicyclists will be riding against the normal flow of traffic, contrary to the rules of the road. When a path ends, bicyclists riding against traffic may continue riding on the wrong side of the street.
- At intersections, motorists entering or crossing the roadway often do not notice bicyclists approaching from the right, as they are not expecting any traffic from that direction.
- Barriers used to separate motor vehicle traffic from path users can obstruct sight lines along both facilities and can reduce access to and across the path.

- Snow plowed from the adjacent roadway can obstruct the path. (p. 11-8)”

Even if one ignores the fact that Beacon Street is not a suitable place for an off-street path per the design guidelines, the proposed design does not meet the requirements for off-street paths, which require separation from an adjacent road: “wide separation between a shared use path and the adjacent highway is desirable. This demonstrates to both the bicyclist and the motorist that the path functions as an independent facility for bicyclists and others. This separation area also acts as a “recovery zone” for path users. A 7-foot separation between the edge of the shoulder and the shared use path is recommended with the minimum being 5 feet. (p. 11-9)”. Furthermore, although the Guide contemplates one-way paths “rarely” “and only in a special situation, such as to circumvent mature trees or connect to parallel paths,” the Guide adds that “It should be recognized that one-way paths often will be used as two-way facilities unless effective measures are taken to assure one-way operation. Without such enforcement, it should be assumed that shared use paths would be used as two-way facilities by both pedestrians and bicyclists and designed accordingly. (p. 11-9)” The proposed Beacon Street design does not meet the width requirements for two-way paths.

Design Details

On-Street Parking Side

The current design proposal does not give sufficient details of intersection treatments. It appears, however, that on the side where it is permitted, on-street parking will continue all the way up to driveways and most of the way up to intersections. These details are specifically contrary to the practices of Copenhagen and New York City, which have found that providing either separate bicycle signals or at least sufficient sight and merging distance at intersections is essential to making the facilities at least moderately safe (although, as noted, the most careful recent study found that the net effect was to increase collisions despite these efforts). Having parked cars block the view of bicyclists at intersections and driveways will be extremely dangerous. Yet improving the situation would require the elimination of significantly more parking than would otherwise be necessary just to provide sufficient width for parking. Moreover, the City of Somerville is essentially admitting that it will be politically impossible to remove enough parking to make those intersections safe.

No-Parking Side

The current design calls for a small (3 inch) mountable curb between the travel lane and the cycle track on the side where there is no on-street parking. By intent, motorists will be able if necessary to mount this small curb and thus enter the cycle track (e.g., for temporary parking). If so, there is nothing to prevent a texting or drunk driver from mounting this curb and running into a bicyclist -- which apparently is the reason for having a cycle track in the first place. At the same time, DCI says that cyclists will be able to cross the curb to move from cycle track to travel lane. But what about moving back in the other direction? The curb could produce a “diverting” fall, which is the kind that occurs when a bicycle wheel tracks along a longitudinal bump or joint, and the rider

is unable to balance. Are there any existing examples of such curbing that could be tested for their safety in this regard?

Laws

Under current law, bicyclists are permitted to use sidewalks outside of business districts unless otherwise restricting by local ordinance. Somerville traffic laws list sidewalk-bicycling prohibited areas, and none of these include Beacon Street. However, bicyclists riding on the sidewalk must follow the rules for pedestrians. One of these rules is: "No pedestrian shall suddenly leave a sidewalk or safety island and walk or run into the path of a vehicle which is so close that it is impossible for the driver to yield the right of way." This means that bicyclists on the sidewalk should pause at every single crosswalk and driveway to make sure no vehicle is coming close. For children riding slowly on the sidewalk this is acceptable. For adults bicycling to work, it is not. Bicyclists who know of the additional risk will be forced to ride very slowly, and many more bicyclists will unwittingly take on additional risk.

Although with the cycle track it is expected that bicyclists will use the "track" and pedestrians will use the "sidewalk," there is no law requiring this. Somerville rules say that "Pedestrians . . . are permitted to use bicycle paths." People will be able to walk along the cycle track, even three abreast, stand on it to wait for a bus, store trash cans on it, or temporarily place furniture and hand trucks on it. Even if Somerville attempts to prohibit this behavior, it will occur anyhow. By contrast, pedestrians are specifically prohibited from walking on roadways, and practice generally follows this law (except in snow emergencies).

At the same time, under Massachusetts law, bicyclists have a legal right to use the travel lanes of public roads, even if there is an adjacent bicycle path. Many cyclists will find that the cycle track is too dangerous and slow, or is blocked by snow or trash cans. Yet if they choose to ride on the roadway, they cannot help but occupy all of the single travel lane in the current design. Many motorists, seeing the adjacent bike path, will honk and scream at bicyclists, and in some cases will assault them (including by deliberately passing too closely, or pulling in front and stopping short).

Alternatives

Approving this design would create a bad precedent. I would point out that Illinois DOT recently has told the City of Chicago to wait for further study before adding cycle tracks. According to a press account, IDOT said, "We don't want to make decisions on a scattershot basis. Our traffic engineers want to see more data on the impact of protected bike lanes" including these concerns: the visibility of cyclists at intersections and operational issues like maintenance and snow-removal around protected bike lanes. Approving protected bike lanes for Chicago would open the floodgates to allowing all other local governments in the state to do the same, according to IDOT.

Source:

http://www.chicagotribune.com/classified/automotive/ct-met-getting-around-0211-20130211,0,5097859.column?track=rss&utm_source=buffer&buffer_share=7cd9c

The above discussion should make it amply clear that cycle tracks increase collision rates for urban bicycling, that cyclists who continue to exercise their right to use the road will not be accommodated, contrary to MassDOT's own policies, and that an effort to make the cycle track behind the parking lane even moderately safe would require the elimination of far more parking than the community is willing to tolerate. Moreover, on the other side, cyclists are no more protected from errant motorists than they would with an ordinary bike lane.

To the extent that there is merit in the plan compared to the current condition of narrow bike lanes next to parked cars, it comes from removing on-street parking. This removes the threat of "dooring" on one side and provides enough room to add a buffer zone between the bike lane and the **parked** cars on the other side. If politically feasible, this is clearly the safest design for bicycling, given the figures cited above on the frequency of dooring collisions and intersection collisions. Merely removing parking on one side and using the remaining space for improved bike lanes (adjacent to sidewalk and adjacent to buffer zone rather than adjacent to parked cars) would require significantly less parking removal than that needed for cycle tracks. As has been noted by others, there are opportunities to increase the effective amount of car parking available by increasing the number of metered spaces, meter rates and time restrictions, and by sharing available off-street parking.

In areas where parking removal is not possible, the second-best solution is to use shared lane markings sufficiently far away from parked cars to encourage cyclists to ride outside of the door zone.

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2013 2:35 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Somerville Beacon Street cycle track

From: Ed Abrams RE/MAX [mailto:eabrams@yourguidehome.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 12, 2013 10:51 PM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: Somerville Beacon Street cycle track

To whom it may concern:

I am opposed to the current design of the Beacon Street, Somerville cycle track. The design is dangerously flawed and the removal or parking is a threat to the residents and businesses of Beacon Street.

I am a patron of the businesses on Beacon Street, such as Cafe Rustica, R.F. O'Sullivan, The Thirsty Scholar, Zoes, Petsi's Pies, and Seven Hills Liquors. I often stop at these businesses in the course of a busy day and rely on parking on Beacon Street. There are many times when I cannot find a spot on Beacon St and have to park on side streets or Oxford Street in Cambridge. If half the parking disappears I will not be able to patronize these local businesses.

I have reviewed the design of the cycle track. It is flawed and very dangerous. The design is based on a flawed assumption: that bike/car accidents are mostly the result of dooring. The data shows that the majority of bike/car accidents on Beacon Street (and all other locations) is at intersections. There are numerous side streets and driveways on Beacon Street. Beacon Street is very busy and it is difficult for cars to enter it from the side streets and driveways. Cars will be blocking the cycle track as they wait to pull onto Beacon Street resulting in many collisions. Drivers are not conditioned to see bikes on a cycle track and will not see the bikes. In addition, many cyclists will also bike on the street (because bikes in the cycle track will be going too slow), leading to further confusion and danger.

Keeping the cycle track clear of snow and ice in the winter will be impossible. This has proven to be an insurmountable problem on the Concord Ave cycle track in Cambridge. During the latest blizzard the city could not even plow the parking spaces on Beacon Street. It is certain that the city will not plow the cycle track.

Given the urban nature and the fact that half the parking will be eliminated it is a certainty that the cycle track will be blocked by delivery trucks and parked cars. This is happening with the Concord Ave. cycle track.

I am on record that if the cycle track is installed as designed it will lead to vastly higher rates of crashes of cyclists and that it will need to be removed. The design is not based on the reality of the complexity of the urban environment on Beacon Street.

Sincerely,
Ed Abrams

Ed Abrams

80 Wendell Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2013 3:03 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Support for Cycling Track on Beacon St Somerville

From: Katie Howard [mailto:katiehoward@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 13, 2013 11:28 AM
To: DOT Feedback Highway; mheuston@hotmail.com; Holland, Shawn (DOT); hmorrisson@somervillema.gov; jdelory@somervillema.gov
Subject: Support for Cycling Track on Beacon St Somerville

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of a well-designed cycling track on Beacon St in Somerville, MA. I live at 87 Marion St, 02143. My husband and I both bike regularly. Biking allows us to not have a car, contribute to a more sustainable future and improves our physical health. We have both been struck by vehicles while biking and I believe that providing the infrastructure for biking makes it more popular, improves safety because of both an increased number of cyclists and because we would be separated from vehicles, and with increased bicyclists creates a better motor vehicle experience in both driving and parking because less people use cars.

I also think it is important to build raised crosswalks that allow pedestrians to be visible from the street so that cars turning in can see pedestrians. Also I support raised cycletracks at cross streets with no signals for added protection so that cars slow down when turning onto side streets.

Thank you for your time. Sincerely,
Katie Howard

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2013 2:41 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Beacon Street Redevelopment - Project File No. 607209

From: Ilana Fisher [mailto:i.fishr@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2013 10:11 AM
To: DOT Feedback Highway
Subject: Re: Beacon Street Redevelopment - Project File No. 607209

Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer
Project Management Section, Project File No. 607209
MassDOT
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Mr Broderick,

I am writing to offer my support for a bicycle and pedestrian-friendly redevelopment of Beacon Street. I am a local resident and I use Beacon Street on a daily basis.

I would like to see Beacon Street set the standard for other redevelopments in the future. To do this I believe the process must be transparent at every stage, decisions must be made based on clearly referenced evidence, future use must be considered in addition to current use, and the end result must be flexible, attractive and easy to maintain.

My current use of this road is as a pedestrian and a passenger in taxi. I would like to be able to more easily cycle and use buses. I walk regularly to shops, public transport, childcare, local businesses, parks and the library.

The following is a list of some of the things I would like you to consider in your planning:

- Good quality footpaths
- well marked bicycle lanes with signs at the road side for when the road markings are obscured eg snow, rain, night
- access for wheelchairs and strollers
- more pedestrian crossings
- bicycle parking (secure posts) at regular intervals
- water drainage so that cyclists and pedestrians don't have to walk in puddles
- a plan to regularly maintain all lights, footpaths and crossings
- resident parking permits that are for immediate locals only
- a bus service running the length of the street
- better lighting
- signposts at pedestrian crossings
- a sign to indicate end of footpath at the academy of sciences

- the potential for mixed bus/bike/commuter lanes in peak times that turn into parking off peak for local business
- bus stops with shelters
- dedicated space for rubbish bins that do not impede the footpaths
- Bins for dog waste
- public bins for rubbish

Regards,

Ilana Fisher
19 Harris Street #2
Cambridge MA 02140

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

Federal Aid Project
Somerville, MA

Beacon Street Project
Project File No 607209

RECEIVED

FEB 12 2013

MassDOT
PROJECT MANAGEMENT

This sheet is provided for your comments. Your input is solicited and appreciated. Please return your sheet, with comments, to a staff member at the meeting, or mail to:

Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer
MassDOT - Highway Division
10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116-3973
Attn: Project Management Section

The final date for receipt of written statements and exhibits for inclusion into the official hearing transcript will be ten (10) days after the Public Hearing.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

THANK YOU FOR THE REDESIGNED 25% PLAN FOR
BEACON ST. INCLUDING NEW SIDE WALKS, ROAD SURFACE,
BIKE LANES, & CYCLE TRACKS - I GREATLY APPRECIATE
THE IMPROVEMENTS FOR ALL USERS AS A FREQUENT
CYCLIST ALONG BEACON ST - BUT ALSO AS A CAR
OWNER & DAILY MBTA RIDER. THE BALANCED
APPROACH IS THE BEST WAY FORWARD AS OUR REGION
CONTINUES TO GROW AND DENSIFY. THANK YOU FOR
YOUR TIME AND CONSIDERATION.

Name: CHARLIE MCCABE Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: 87 NEW ST UNIT 406
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

Federal Aid Project
Somerville, MA

RECEIVED

FEB 13 2013

Beacon Street Project
Project File No 607209

MassDOT
PROJECT MANAGEMENT

2013 FEB 13 A 9:10:01

This sheet is provided for your comments. Your input is solicited and appreciated. Please return your sheet, with comments, to a staff member at the meeting, or mail to:

Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer
MassDOT - Highway Division
10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116-3973
Attn: Project Management Section

The final date for receipt of written statements and exhibits for inclusion into the official hearing transcript will be ten (10) days after the Public Hearing.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

Please do not take any parking away on Beacon St.
It is already too little and too difficult to find. I pay over
\$20,000 a year in Somerville taxes + water + sewer bills +
should at least be able to park.

Also please before any procedure, will you
make sure the sewer line is repaired.

Thank you

Name: Diana Dalley Title: owner, 39 Beacon St, Somerville

Organization: _____

Address: 2 Farrar St Cambridge

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION

RECEIVED

Federal Aid Project
Somerville, MA

FEB 13 2013

MassDOT
PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Beacon Street Project
Project File No 607209

This sheet is provided for your comments. Your input is solicited and appreciated. Please return your sheet, with comments, to a staff member at the meeting, or mail to:

Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer
MassDOT – Highway Division
10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116-3973
Attn: Project Management Section

The final date for receipt of written statements and exhibits for inclusion into the official hearing transcript will be ten (10) days after the Public Hearing.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

My name is Josephine Mazullo
I live at 301 C Beacon Street Som. MA. 02143
I have been a resident at this address for
65 years.
I have a handicap space in front of my
home. I'm concerned what will happen to
my space when the changes will be made
on Beacon Street.

Thank you.

Name: _____ Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

2013 FEB 12 A 8:47

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: Katie Howard [katiehoward@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 13, 2013 11:28 AM
To: DOT Feedback Highway; mheuston@hotmail.com; Holland, Shawn (DOT); hmorrison@somervillema.gov; jdelory@somervillema.gov
Subject: Support for Cycling Track on Beacon St Somerville

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of a well-designed cycling track on Beacon St in Somerville, MA. I live at 87 Marion St, 2, 02143. My husband and I both bike regularly. Biking allows us to not have a car, contribute to a more sustainable future and improves our physical health. We have both been struck by vehicles while biking and I believe that providing the infrastructure for biking makes it more popular, improves safety because of both an increased number of cyclists and because we would be separated from vehicles, and with increased bicyclists creates a better motor vehicle experience in both driving and parking because less people use cars.

I also think it is important to build raised crosswalks that allow pedestrians to be visible from the street so that cars turning in can see pedestrians. Also I support raised cycletracks at cross streets with no signals for added protection so that cars slow down when turning onto side streets.

Thank you for your time. Sincerely,
Katie Howard

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: Maryann Heuston [mheuston@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 13, 2013 11:53 AM
To: katiehoward@gmail.com; DOT Feedback Highway; Holland, Shawn (DOT); hmorrison@somervillema.gov; jdelory@somervillema.gov
Subject: RE: Support for Cycling Track on Beacon St Somerville

Katie,
Thanks so much for your feedback on this very important project for the City and Ward 2 in particular. The attention to Pedestrian safety as well as cyclist safety is a very important aspect of this project and the final product will greatly improve the quality of life for those who live on and near and travel Beacon st.

Maryann

Maryann Heuston
Ward 2 Alderman
Somerville, MA

Date: Wed, 13 Feb 2013 11:27:44 -0500
Subject: Support for Cycling Track on Beacon St Somerville
From: katiehoward@gmail.com
To: dot.feedback.highway@state.ma.us; mheuston@hotmail.com; shawn.holland@state.ma.us; hmorrison@somervillema.gov; jdelory@somervillema.gov

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I am writing in support of a well-designed cycling track on Beacon St in Somerville, MA. I live at 87 Marion St, 2, 02143. My husband and I both bike regularly. Biking allows us to not have a car, contribute to a more sustainable future and improves our physical health. We have both been struck by vehicles while biking and I believe that providing the infrastructure for biking makes it more popular, improves safety because of both an increased number of cyclists and because we would be separated from vehicles, and with increased bicyclists creates a better motor vehicle experience in both driving and parking because less people use cars.

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Thank you for your time. Sincerely,
Katie Howard

Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: dario21@comcast.net
Sent: Wednesday, February 13, 2013 9:09 PM
To: hmorrison@somervillema.gov; Holland, Shawn (DOT); aldermanconnolly@gmail.com; brucemdesmond@yahoo.com; aldermansullivan@aol.com; william.a.white@verizon.net; aldermanroche@comcast.net
Subject: Cycle track – Letter of concern
Attachments: Letter to city of Somerville.docx

German Velasquez- Tel 617.567.3879

Cycle track – Letter of concern

To whom it may concern

I am an employee of Dali and cyclist by hobby; I am very concern on the proposed Cycle Track on Beacon Street in Somerville. I love cycling in the city but we need to take a close look at how this will impact the small owners in this area. As parking is limited and by cutting into already limited parking space it will be detrimental that can impact as our customers in Dali will have no place to park. Working in Dali for the past 8 years I am very concern and worry of the direct economic impact this will have to our business hurting my financial pocket which is worrisome on this slow economic recovery.

- View the map of where Dali is, the only parking to customer is beacon street, as the washington street is for residential parking only
- If the cycle track goes in effect were will our customers park?



German Velasquez- Tel 617.567.3879

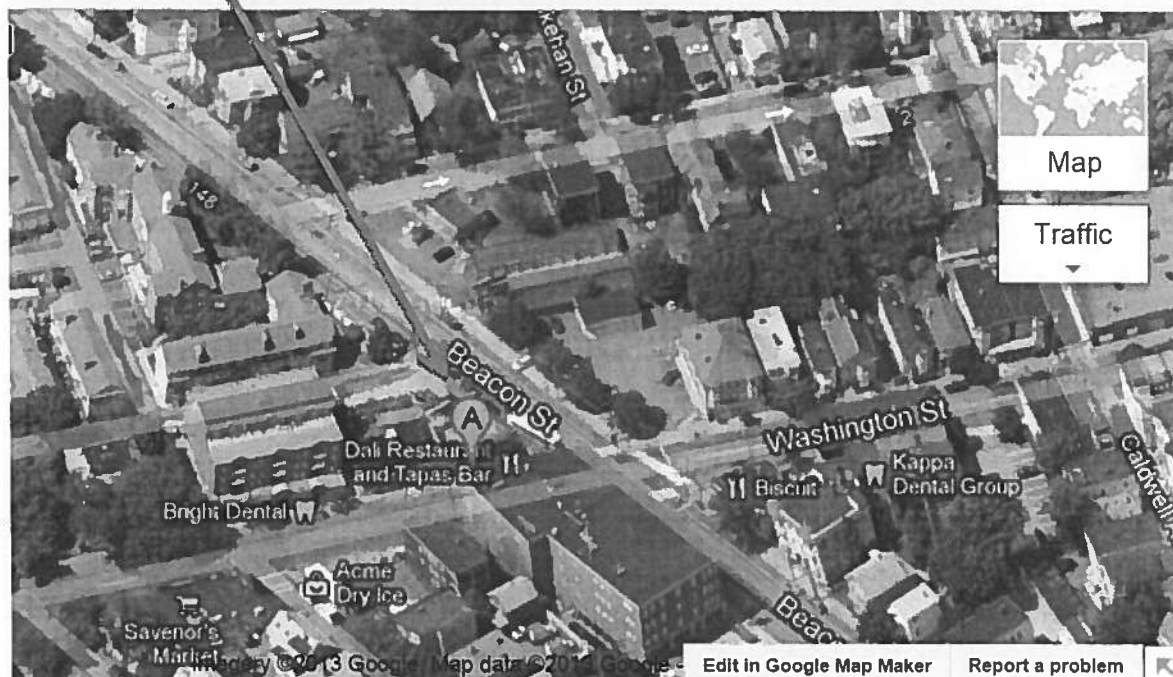
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- View the map of where Dali is, the only parking to customer is beacon street, as the washington street is for residential parking only
- If the cycle track goes in effect were will our customers park?

415 Washington Street, Somerville, MA



Holland, Shawn (DOT)

From: DOT Feedback Highway
Sent: Tuesday, February 12, 2013 3:55 PM
To: Holland, Shawn (DOT)
Subject: FW: Beacon St. Project 607209

From: Astrid Dodds [mailto:astrid.dodds@earthlink.net]
Sent: Tuesday, February 12, 2013 3:02 PM
To: Broderick, Thomas (DOT)
Cc: DOT Feedback Highway; Rabito, Luciano (DOT); shawnholland@state.ma.us
Subject: Beacon St. Project 607209

TO: Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer
2013

12 February

Mass. Department of Transportation

10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116

Thomas.f.broderick@dot.state.ma.us

Cc: ShawnHolland@state.ma.us

Cc: Luciano.rabito@mhd.state.ma.us

Cc: dot.feedback.highway@state.ma.us

FROM: Astrid Dodds

73 Wendell St.

Cambridge, MA 02138

RE: PROJECT FILE NO. 607209, Beacon Street Reconstruction Project

Dear Mr. Broderick:

I have lived on Wendell St., Cambridge, a block and half from Beacon St. for 40 years and have crossed Beacon St. on foot at least twice a week for that long, chiefly to reach the Star Market. I walk along Beacon St. to reach Porter Sq. and the MBTA Red Line. Walking is the only way I experience Beacon St., so I am a keen student of cyclist, pedestrian, and motorist behavior on Beacon St.

All of us who depend on Beacon St. welcome its long-overdue reconstruction. However, I object to adding a cycle track to the Beacon St. Project. The greater safety this cycle track buys for cyclists is an illusion. The increased danger of cyclist-pedestrian conflict is real.

After I itemize the problems the cycle track will create, I will mention some crosswalk issues that I hope you will address, particularly Somerville's misguided plan to pave crosswalks in low-visibility pavers.

My Cambridge neighborhood lobbied more than a decade ago for two improvements now in the Beacon St. plan that I trust will stay there because they are crucial for pedestrians and benefit everyone:

1. Adding a sidewalk along the American Academy of Arts & Sciences property will finally provide for continuous pedestrian travel on the south side of Beacon.
2. Reconfiguring the top of Oxford where it meets Beacon St. so that Oxford becomes a distinct right turn off of Beacon. Right now the top of Oxford is so wide that 90% of MV drivers do not signal their intent, leaving cyclists, pedestrians and other drivers playing a tough game of chicken.

The proposed cycle track: chief problems for pedestrians

1. PEDS & BIKES AT THE SAME ELEVATION INVITE PED-BIKE CONFLICT

The absence of an effective physical barrier between the proposed cycle track and the sidewalk means there is no obstacle to cyclists "borrowing" sidewalk space just as cyclists now use curb cuts to access city sidewalks. On one side of Beacon there is no change in elevation, on the other just a 3" mountable curb. Cyclists will swerve onto the sidewalk when they encounter other cyclists, errant trash cans, or a mound of snow.

2. VISUAL "BARRIERS" DON'T COUNT & MAY COST

Cyclists who want to pass cyclists, small children and dogs, will not be deterred by a decorative, flat brick strip between the cycle track and the sidewalk, nor by trash cans or decorative light poles. Brick strips, tree wells and trees can be hazards for pedestrians with impaired vision or mobility.

3. TREES: AMENITY OR PERIL?

What I see on the cycle track/sidewalk plan are long lines of street trees that:

- are too close together for tree health
- cast shadows at night making it hard to see trip hazards or cyclists
- need pruning to prevent ped and cyclist eye damage
- have metal tree grates that can be a slip or trip hazard for peds and cyclists alike.
- have trunks that if run into are a hazard & will eventually have roots that upheave the cycle track-sidewalk.

4. WHO MAINTAINS THE SIDEWALK AND CYCLE TRACK?

Must adjacent property owners clear snow and ice and leaves from the cycle track as well as the sidewalk? Where do the trash and recycling barrels go? If they block the cycle track on trash days, do cyclists detour to the sidewalk? Must DPW workers look both ways before claiming barrels from the cycle track?

5. PROBLEMS FOR BOTH PEDS AND BIKES WHEN THE CYCLE TRACK ENDS OR IS INTERRUPTED.

At the 40+ driveways and 10+ side streets interrupting the Beacon St. cycle track, all effort to separate cyclists and pedestrians ends.

- “Off-road ride-out” is a well-documented point of MV-bike collision that surely applies to cycle tracks. MV drivers are not in the habit of looking for cyclists riding off of sidewalks/cycle tracks into their path. Do MV drivers look both ways for cyclists twice – on the cycle track and in the road?

- At every driveway and cross street, bike-ped conflict rises. Cyclists will approach and leave the cycle track in the path of crossing pedestrians. Peds negotiating passage in front of MVs exiting a driveway or side street must simultaneously negotiate with approaching or passing cyclists.

- Each end of the cycle track – at the RR bridge and at Washington-Kirkland -- creates a temptation to cyclists to continue on the sidewalk rather than the road.

How eager will cyclists be to move into the roadway if there is a sidewalk nearby with an approachable curb cut? Most pedestrians object to sharing the sidewalk with cyclists. Businesses should object to sidewalk cycling unless they think it's ok that customers have to look both ways as they leave the store.

Many people believe that municipalities are permitted by state law to prohibit sidewalk cycling only in “business districts.” This is not the case. Cities and towns can ban sidewalk cycling anywhere and should.

Unless Somerville intends to use the Beacon St. cycle track as a foot in the door to city-wide sidewalk cycling, it should act now to ban sidewalk cycling in all but designated (and posted) sidewalks.

Hearing proponents of the Beacon cycle track dwell on the need to build this 1.1mile (interrupted) cycle track so that young families with children will try cycling, I fear the cycling community already covets public sidewalks and this cycle track is the proverbial foot-in-the-door. The new AAAS sidewalk will be a test, yes?

6. SEEING INVISIBLE CYCLISTS: WILL BEACON ST. PEDESTRIANS GET ANY HELP WITH THIS HAZARD?

The single greatest challenge Beacon St. pedestrians face now is how to cross Beacon at dusk or after dark – or even on a rainy day -- without walking out in front of an invisible cyclist. Beacon St. cyclists are, on average, better at being visible, including

observing the state law requiring cyclists to have a white light in front visible from 500' from dusk to dawn. My job is to avoid the 1 in 3 who right now do *nothing* to help me stay out of their way at the present unsignalized Sacramento crosswalk. The danger to peds of un-lit cyclists will only increase with a cycle track. Traffic signals are no protection from unlit cyclists because more than half of Cambridge and Somerville cyclists ignore red lights. Unlit cyclists on the Beacon cycle track will be a constant hazard to pedestrians, all the more so for being silent and nearby at all times.

If Somerville and MA DOT intend to encourage walking as much as cycling, it should be easy to figure out a way to induce cyclist compliance with this state law – at least on Beacon St.

7. 25% OF AMERICANS HAVE DISABILITIES

- 25% of Americans have a disability of some kind, not always obvious and not limited to the elderly. How can pedestrians with disabilities — including limited vision, mobility, hearing or cognitive processing skills (and that last includes young children) -- manage to safely co-exist with fast-moving bicycles on a cycle track that looks like a sidewalk? Walking is one of the few forms of exercise easily available to older Americans of limited means; MA DOT and Somerville need to consider whether their mission is to facilitate the opportunity for walking as exercise for all residents young and old, especially older residents of limited income who can't afford a health club or even the car to drive to a mall.

8. BIKE-PED COLLISIONS ARE NOT A FIGMENT OF PEDESTRIAN IMAGINATION

- Bike-ped conflict exists; it damages bodies and alters lives. Two Hunter College researchers (Tuckel & Milczarski, 2009) analyzed data from 100 hospital emergency rooms across the US and found evidence of at least 1,000 bike-ped collisions each year in the US between 1980 and 2009 that resulted in hospital emergency room treatment for a pedestrian victim. Their later, 2011 study of ped-bike collisions found 1,000 pedestrians per year sought emergency room treatment in New York state alone. There may have been injured cyclists, but the hospital coding system they used applied only to injured pedestrians. Tuckel & Milczarski did not attempt to allocate blame for the collision, only to document the existence of bike-ped conflict that results in pedestrian injury and death. They did this because the extent, incidence, and severity of bike-ped conflict has been an anecdotal matter until now, easily dismissed by the cycling community and, apparently, by transportation planners at all levels.

It should not be beyond cyclists' imagination that the qualities that make bicycles environmentally friendly are the very qualities which make them a hazard to pedestrians: small, fast and quiet. Cars may be bigger, noisier, and faster than bicycles, but pedestrians have a much better chance of seeing and hearing them in time to protect themselves.

9. CYCLETRACK QUESTIONS ABOUT WHICH I HAVE NOT FOUND ANY ANSWER

- How many times will the elevation change underfoot in Beacon St. crosswalks that intersect the cycletrack/sidewalk?
- Whose job is it to clear snow and ice from the access to crosswalks, including opening up plow ridges?
- Are cycle tracks defined as one way only in the direction of MV traffic on that side of the road? If the answer is yes, how is that message conveyed to cyclists and/or enforced? If not, how do cyclists going in two directions on a cycle track avoid each other?
- Are cyclists obliged to use a cycle track if there is one, or is it optional?
- If cyclists can/will still ride in the road, does that mean that, as a pedestrian crossing the road, I must watch for lit and un-lit cyclists in **four** places – in the road on both sides and in the cycle track on both sides?
- Does Somerville have a plan to require Beacon Street cyclists to comply with the state law requiring a white light in front visible from 500'? Whether the cycle track is built or not, why is it not a condition of Mass. DOT highway funds that MA cities and towns develop programs to increase cyclist compliance with state law?
- **BUS NO. 83 DISRUPTION.** Two #83 bus stops on Beacon near Park St. are in the way of the cycle track and slated to be moved to Park St. Ironically, this move returns the inbound bus stop to a location on Park that was tried and found severely wanting. Riders waiting on the narrow Park St. sidewalk for bus 83 must fasten their gaze on the top of a very

high, sharp Park St. hill over which the 83 bus comes, fast, hoping to make the green light for a left turn onto Beacon. Since there is no clue to the bus' approach until it appears at the top of the hill about 50 feet away, the bus patron has to be ready to signal the MBTA driver instantly or risk missing the bus. Now the same will be true for bus 83 outbound riders: if the stop is moved to Park, busses approaching on Beacon will be out of sight. As a solution to cycle track-bus conflict, this move demonstrates disregard for the comfort and wellbeing of MBTA bus patrons. Also disregard for T bus drivers, who probably disliked the Park St. bus stop as much as the bus patrons did. Moving these two Bus 83 stops to notoriously inhospitable Park St. locations continues the decades-long saga of chipping away at public transportation on Beacon St. In about 1975, Bus 83 ran the entire length of Beacon, but had to detour "temporarily" to Somerville Ave. because the Beacon St. RR bridge was too weak. In 1980, the MBTA gave residents a letter promising that bus 83 would return to upper Beacon when the bridge was rebuilt. In 1993, the MBTA and Somerville jointly decided to renege on that promise.

CROSSING BEACON ST. ON FOOT: EIGHT PROBLEMS TO FIX

For Beacon St. to be "a complete street," it has to work as well for pedestrians as it does for everyone else. Pedestrians do care about the quality of the sidewalks along the roadway, but they care equally about crossing the road.

1. 1. PAVING CROSSWALKS IN REDDISH BROWN PAVERS EDGED IN GRANITE DOES NOT MEET CURRENTLY-ACCEPTED STANDARDS FOR A PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC CONTROL-SAFETY DEVICE.

This aspect of the Beacon St. plan should be scrapped.

To be visible at night, crosswalks need to be marked in bright, white, bold reflective stripes that are slip- and trip-resistant. This color and pattern is the symbol for "pedestrians crossing" most easily recognized by fast-moving cyclists and distracted drivers. It is the pattern that best illuminates pedestrian presence in the crosswalk, especially at night and in bad weather. Granite edging of crosswalks is a slip hazard. Crosswalks are technically a "safety device" and should not be camouflaged or decorated in the name of street beautification.

2. ADD A CROSSWALK ON UPPER BEACON AT PRENTISS OR FOREST STREET

It is a half-mile walk from the RR bridge crosswalk to the Sacramento crosswalk, a preposterously long distance that surely does not reflect MA DOT guidelines for pedestrian

facilities in urban areas. A crosswalk should be added at Forest or Prentiss, unsignalized if necessary.

3. LEAVE THE SACRAMENTO CROSSWALK WHERE IT IS NOW

The present crosswalk at Sacramento from O'Sullivan's to Star Market reflects four-decades old pedestrian desire lines for reaching the Star Market/Shaws. At certain times of the day and week, a steady stream of pedestrians crosses Beacon in the present crosswalk in order to grocery shop. It has been upgraded over the years to the point that it works well for an unsignalized crosswalk. It links the Cambridge-Somerville neighborhood south of Beacon St. to Beacon Street's largest business, Star Market, depositing pedestrians at a break in the Star parking lot fence which is the shortest walk to the store's front door.

4. ADVERTISE THE RR TRACK UNDERPASS TO SOMERVILLE AVE. WITH MURALS, SIGNS, PAINTED LINES ON THE ROAD ON BOTH

ENDS -- NOT A CROSSWALK THAT PUTS PEDS IN CONFLICT WITH SUPERMARKET DELIVERY TRUCKS

Installing a new crosswalk to line up closer to the RR track underpass is neither necessary nor safe. A crosswalk ending at the NW corner of the Star parking lot puts pedestrians in conflict with MV traffic turning into and out of both the Star parking lot, some of it 16 wheelers accessing the Star loading dock. As a frequent user of the underpass to reach Bus 87 or 83 on Somerville Ave., I find the present Sacramento crosswalk convenient, safe and direct.

5. THE MUSEUM STREET CROSSWALK SHOULD NOT BE ELIMINATED

5. It reflects decades-long pedestrian desire lines. Yes, pedestrians can walk up to Sacramento or down to Scott St. on the new AAAS sidewalk, but should they have to? During the academic year, it is a vital route on foot to access Harvard.

6. 6. NO SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION SHOULD REQUIRE PEDESTRIANS TO WAIT MORE THAN 90 SECONDS.

This applies to signals that have an automatic WALK and those that do not. Cambridge has applied this standard with great success.

7. ALL SIGNALIZED BEACON INTERSECTIONS SHOULD HAVE AN AUTOMATIC WALK CYCLE.

Pedestrians should not have to wait every time they want to cross the street. Eliminating push buttons treats pedestrians as motorists and cyclists are treated: sometimes you luck out and sometimes you don't. It tells pedestrians that they are not at the end of the

transportation food chain. The intersections at Park-Scott and Washington-Kirkland must have high enough pedestrian volumes to justify automatically recurring WALK signals.

8. BEWARE RAISED CROSSWALKS

Several people have promoted "raised crosswalks". If they are paved with reddish brown pavers, they are not visible enough and are not as likely to be recognized by drivers as a pedestrian crossing zone. If raised crosswalks must be shared with cyclists riding across side streets from one cycle track section to the next, the raised crosswalks will not be wide enough. Raised crosswalks at side street entrances to Beacon St. will make it difficult for MV drivers to pull out cautiously and navigate around peds and bikes in order to enter Beacon St. safely.

SUMMARY

The frequently changing conditions of a cycle track that shares a sidewalk with pedestrians will present a challenge to both cyclists and pedestrians. Even a cycle track at a slightly lower elevation than the sidewalk creates problems.

It would be better to narrow the sidewalks and give more roadway space to cyclists than to force pedestrians to share sidewalk-cycle tracks with cyclists. Adequate bike lanes in the newly-paved roadway plus a program to induce Beacon St. cyclists to have the legally mandated white light in front visible from 500' – plus some highly visible clothing – would do far more for cyclist safety and cyclist-pedestrian coexistence than the proposed cycle track.

Cyclists lobbied 40 years ago for bicycles to have the legal status in MA of VEHICLES, not toys. And they won. Vehicles, motorized and non-motorized, belong in the roadway, a roadway made safer for all users, vehicles as well as people who need to cross the road from time to time.

The phrase "mountable curbs" is as meaningless as the phrase "one size fits all." A curb that is "mountable" does not function as a curb worthy of the name – not for keeping storm water in the roadway, not for keeping cars and trucks and bicycles off the sidewalk, and certainly not for keeping frequently unlit, always silent, sometimes fast cyclists from surprising -- and thus threatening -- pedestrians at any point along their journey.

Walking is a desirable way to get around – for environmental, financial and health reasons. Communities as dense as Somerville and Cambridge should re-engineer the streets to encourage legal, visible cycling and should not demand that pedestrians to share their off-road space with fast, inaudible, often-invisible wheeled vehicles called bicycles.

It would be a great pity if the Beacon St. project, in the DOT pipeline for over a decade, were postponed yet again, this time due to the cycle track controversy. Please find another route on which to experiment with a cycle track, and please help Somerville design a Beacon St. upgrade that respects and supports the needs of all Beacon users.

Sincerely,

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Member, Cambridge Pedestrian Advisory Committee 1995-00

Member, MAPC Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee, one year, mid to late 90s

Co-founder, Somerville-Cambridge committee of residents and businesses trying to lobby Bus 83 back onto Beacon St., approx. 1993

Are cycle tracks safe?

The literature on this appears to be mixed. Proponents and detractors can easily cherry pick studies that show that cycle tracks are safe or unsafe. They can also easily cherry pick studies with flawed methodology showing their opponent's point of view and claim that this means that their opponents' claims are invalid. Even within a single study outcomes are often varied from one cycle track to another.

Does this mean cycle track studies are useless? No. Generally, studies of the same cycle track or group of cycle tracks are consistent. Montreal cycle tracks are safer than Berlin cycle tracks. Within Montreal, cycle tracks on one way streets are three to four times safer than ones on two way streets. And overall, correcting for obviously flawed studies, more studied cycle tracks are safe than unsafe. Like any transportation infrastructure, safety of cycle tracks depends on their design and their suitability for their environment.

Only a few studies have attempted to discern the safety impact of design features of different cycle tracks. And unfortunately the study which best measures the safety impact of cycle track design uses a flawed statistical model in an attempt to claim that all cycle tracks are unsafe. The city's Design Exception Report corrects these statistics to show that this is not so; the raw data show that many designs of cycle track are in fact safe.

But two particular design features that this study identifies still make a difference to cycle track safety. The first of these design features is the presence of turn lanes. Drivers leaving the main road on a path that will cross the cycle track often do not expect or cannot easily see bicycles on the cycle track. Drivers also often expect cyclists to the right of parked cars to be moving at pedestrian speeds, and miscalculate whether they have time to make a turn. This is shown by the number of collisions blamed on "excessive speed" on the part of a cyclist going 10 to 12 miles per hour. Cyclists in Boston know to look out for turning traffic, but here in Somerville many motorists do not use their turn signals. Having a dedicated turn lane helps cyclists identify turning motorists and avoid accidents, even when the cyclist has the right of way.

The other design feature is a cycle track that reenters the roadway before intersections. Motorists turning off the main roadway have better visibility of cyclists, more correct

understanding of the cyclists' speeds, and for right turning traffic a greater distance to get to the right of bicycle traffic so that the path crossing is not constrained to a particular point in space and therefore time. This is called a "shortened" cycle track, as opposed to an "advanced" cycle track which runs right up to the intersection.

Even applying the city's statistical corrections, the Copenhagen data show that to be safe, a cycle track must have at least one of these two features.

Not identified by this study but easily discernible in the raw data from other studies is that the safety of a cycle track depends on the number of driveways that cross the cycle track to enter the roadway.

Cycle tracks in Cambridge are all shortened, and located on roads with few driveways or intersections. The Vassar Street cycle tracks leave the roadway 200 feet after each intersection and reenter the roadway 300 before the next intersection. Vassar Street also features left turn lanes at Massachusetts Avenue. This is a shining example of how to build a cycle track.

Examining the streets of Montreal and Berlin supports this conclusion. Neither city uses shortened cycle tracks, but Montreal generally has turn lanes, especially on one way streets where it is easier to find room for them, while Berlin does not.

There is no room on Beacon Street for turn lanes, so to make a cycle track safe would require using a shortened cycle track. But the intersections on Beacon Street are generally less than 500 feet apart. Even allowing for advanced cycle tracks at intersections where traffic flows only toward Beacon St, a safe design would result in no cycle track at all in the outbound direction. The only part of Beacon Street that is safe for a cycle track is a 1500 foot section inbound between Museum St and Washington St.

A cycle track in some other location in Somerville could be safe. For instance, Washington St between Union Square and Sullivan Square is wide enough to support turn lanes, and even without turn lanes it has few enough cross streets into which traffic can turn to permit a safely constructed cycle track. With the expected construction of Green Line, this would connect three MBTA stops and transform a route currently cycled only by the brave into something everyone could use. But a cycle track on Beacon St would not be safe for anyone.